

The word *Paradise*, as the very image of a celestial garden, ultimately entered most European languages (cf. French *paradis*, German *Paradies*, Italian *paradiso*, Latin *paradisus*) via Greek *παράδεισος* [*paradeisos*]. However, its Persian origin is more of a political concept rather than its later (religious) derivations. Etymologically, the very root of the word can be traced in the Old Persian term *pairi-daêzā*. It is combined of two parts: '*pairi*' (cf. Sanskrit *pīri*, Greek *περι*), which literally means 'around', and '*daêzā*' as 'pile or heap'. The second part, however, is the origin of the words 'دژ' [*dezh*] or '*diza*', in modern Persian all stand for 'fort' or 'enclosure'. '*Daeza*' also has another root in the Indo-Iranian verb '*dhaizh*' that originally means 'to construct out of earth', and the noun '*dhaizha*', 'that which has been built out of earth'

This definition implies on the presence of the 'wall' constructed out of earth; a fortified space surrounded by formidable walls. It exactly matches the Persian translation of the Avestan word '*pairi-daêzā*' as 'چینه' [*chineh*], which literally means 'clay wall'— used to mark a territory or land belonging to someone, like the wall of a garden, village or a city. It implicitly indicates the non-defensive characteristics of this wall; it separates to define it. However there is a historical and archaeological evidence of topological differences between this kind of border and the defensive wall. This 'enclosed estate' occurs only once in the entire

Avesta, but that occurrence is an extremely significant one. It is where Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord/ God) describes an earthly place:

There, on that place, shall the worshippers of Mazda erect an enclosure, and therein shall they establish him with food, therein shall they establish him with clothes, with the coarsest food and with the most worn-out clothes. That food he shall live on, those clothes he shall wear, and thus shall they let him live, until he has grown to the age of a Hana, or of a Zaurura, or of a Pairishta-khshudra

Hana means, literally, 'an old man;' *Zaurura*, 'a man broken down by age;' *Pairishta-khshudra*, 'one whose seed is dried up.' These words have acquired the technical meanings of 'fifty, sixty, and seventy years old.'

This can be summarized in three points: *paradise* literally (and originally) means 'walled (enclosed) estate;' it insists on the idea of the wall as the 'divider of space' when it defines what does and what does not belong to the dominant power (the owner). The wall here is not a defensive wall; the word '*daeza*' is literally rooted in a verb that means 'to construct from the earth' or 'to be made of clay' /

It divides and separates therefore it produces space. The original description of paradise in the *Avesta* explicitly illustrates an image of an earthly place. "*It signifies and has the sense of a dwelling place, earthen enclosure, of those intimately associated with death.*"

Much has been written about the terrestrial *Paradise*, a.k.a. the *Garden of Eden*, both in the past and in recent times. A wide range of questions have consequently been addressed, including such "esoteric" issues as the nature of the flora and fauna in Eden, the dimension of the marvelous *Garden of Delights*, the exact chronology and the amount of time which Adam and Eve were allowed to spend there, and even the language which was spoken in *Paradise* at this early period of human history. But, overall, the principal point which has traditionally attracted the attention of scholars is the problem of its location. Where was *Paradise* to be found? In this regard, considerable number of different locations have been proposed. Richard Firth-Godbehere presents three notions of *Paradise*. Firstly, that it was a real place on Earth and was to the extreme East; Bede, *On Genesis*, supported this. The second option was that Eden was in

some transitional space between Heaven and the Earth. The third option was a compromise between the two: *Paradise* was a transitional space, located on Earth, but impossible for humanity to gain access to due to some insurmountable geological feature. The second and third options appear to have been the choice of the medieval mapmakers. Whether or not they placed *Paradise* inside or outside the circle, they usually depicted a physical or temporal barrier, never allowing the viewer a glimpse into the interior of *Paradise* before the fall. Besides its traditional whereabouts in the “East”, as *Genesis* 2.8 seems to suggest, one can find scholars arguing for the idea that *Paradise* was located in the Far East, the West Indies (Americas), Mesopotamia, Armenia, the Holy Land, Africa and even at the North Pole. This monographs is not an attempt to discuss the concept of *Paradise*, which is discussed thoroughly by Jean Delumeau in the book *History of Paradise, The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition*. Nor is it, textually, as comprehensive as Alessandro Scafi’s excellent book *Mapping Paradise, A History of Heaven and Earth*. This monograph is merely an overview of the depiction of *Paradise* on early maps. Etymologically, the word is derived from the Old Persian *Pairidaeza* meaning enclosure or park. This story begins in the early medieval period, approximately 400 AD/CE.

Setting the Stage: Jean Delumeau has demonstrated that the concept of a paradisiacal land has its roots in classical antiquity; in the Christian context the image of *Paradise* was based on the biblical narrative, and the following passage contributed to its localization in the east: “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed” (*Genesis* 2:8). Early interpreters debated whether *Paradise* was a real place or an allegory, but gradually the former opinion prevailed, partly thanks to St Augustine of Hippo (†430). Many prominent medieval scholars also describe *Paradise* as a real place on earth, including Isidore of Seville, the Venerable Bede (673–736) and Peter Lombard (†1160).

A genre of Byzantine literature should be mentioned that lies between reality and fiction: the so-called *Paradise journeys*. While the literary genre of Byzantine afterlife journeys provides important information concerning historical events and public figures but nothing significant concerning geography, the case is quite different for *Paradise journeys*. The former texts were read either satirically (e.g., the *Apocolocyntosis* by Seneca, first century CE) or, more seldom, contemplatively; but the latter texts were understood as reality. Starting from *Genesis* the early Christians thought *Paradise* was a real place on earth, lying east of the *oikoumene* [known inhabited world], somewhere beyond India and China. An interesting source for this conviction is the *Hodoiporia apo Edem tou paradeisou arkhi ton Romaion*, written in the fifth century by using the fourth century *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* as a source. The text is an itinerary starting in *Paradise* and leading from India and Ethiopia through Persia and Arabia, Syria and Constantinople to Rome and to France; also the territory of the Huns is mentioned. The short text is preserved in several Greek manuscripts; an Iberian (Georgian) translation also exists. *Paradise* and its rivers are described in great detail; this can be understood as an indicator of importance. The distances between particular locations were mentioned; the numbers are not correct, indeed, but this is unimportant. Nevertheless, one can understand the idea of the anonymous author: *Paradise* is a real place on earth, and one can reach it by covering the distance. The text reflects the common understanding of the masses in the Byzantine world; possibly it was written against pagan ideas of afterlife that were still alive at the time of its composition. In any case, one can feel the theological aim of the text by reading its notices regarding whether Christians or pagans lived at particular places. It should be emphasized that *Paradise* as a real place on earth appears not only in the *Hodoiporia apo Edem* but also in numerous Latin writings, in western medieval cartography and in the *Khristianike topographia* of Cosmas Indicopleustes (#202).

When seeking the meaning and purpose of medieval maps, one cannot assume that European medieval maps were used for the same purposes or had the same meaning as they do today. The differences in structure and content are clues that lead us to imagine how medieval makers and readers of maps saw the world. Another place to look is the context in which maps appear, for a majority of surviving medieval maps appear in books, surrounded by written works and other diagrams. These accompanying materials can tell us much about the role of maps in medieval thought and society. Evelyn Edson, in her book *Mapping Time and Space*, puts forth this thesis that a study of the context of medieval maps in books reveals that many were designed to encompass concepts of time as well as space. Such an idea has also been broached by the German scholar Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken. Looking at maps themselves, particularly the larger world maps, she says their goal is to “portray the course of universal history together with totality of historical space”. Von den Brincken’s theory helps explain the persistent inclusion of places from the past on medieval maps. The city of Troy, the *Garden of Eden*, Noah’s Ark, and the route of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan were as consistently shown as physical features, such as the Pyrenees, or places of contemporary significance, such as the cities of Jerusalem and Rome. It also helps explain why some medieval maps were referred to by their makers as ‘histories’.

It should be noted that the early medieval map, which filled the period between the decline of the scientific method (Greek/Ptolemaic) and the rise of the more practical maps demanded of the great Age of Discovery, differed essentially from the productions of both.

Moreover, certain cartographic conventions were followed. In the great majority of cases East was placed at the top, and some authorities have endeavored to trace this convention back to the maps of the Romans. While this explanation of its origin may be true, the traditions of the Church, which placed in the Orient the *Paradise/Garden of Eden* together with the mountain of the waters of the world and of human life, must have had much to do toward perpetuating it.

According to Alessandro Scafi, the early debate on *Paradise* shows that the *Garden of Eden* presented the Church Fathers with a tangled problem. It was Augustine of Hippo (born 354 in Tagaste, North Africa) who exercised the greatest single influence on Latin Christianity and who worked out an exegetical framework that put the notion of a terrestrial *Paradise* beyond controversy. Augustine’s literal reading of *Genesis* in the Bible provided a new synthesis that welded four centuries of Christian interpretation into an exegesis that would dominate the Church’s thinking for generations to come, creating the conditions for understanding the *Garden of Eden* as a specific place and sanctioning the belief in an earthly *Paradise* that led later scholars to place the *Garden of Eden* on maps of the world. Scafi points out that the medieval geography of the earthly *Paradise* was only a by-product of Augustine’s main theological concerns. Augustine was not himself particularly interested in geographical matters, but his novel emphasis on history fostered a keen interest in geography. His attempt to explain the creation of the world and the shift from eternity into time produced the geographical assumptions about the location of *Eden* that preoccupied theologians and map-makers for centuries thereafter. Space proved to be a product of time and geography an outcome of history: ‘here time becomes space’.

With all that in mind, much of the tone of medieval European cartography and geography is reflected and exemplified by the work of Cosmas of Alexandria (547 AD/CE), later being conferred with the honorary surname of *Indicopleustes*, (i.e., the “Indian - sailor”, see *monograph #202 on this website*). During this time European cartography was heavily “Christianized” as evidenced by the many religious themes and references incorporated in and even dominating many of the surviving maps from the Middle Ages. Though the early Church

Fathers were inclined to reject the idea of a globular earth, there were not a few among who found the theory of a circular earth an acceptable one.

The rejecting of 'classical' geography and the impetus and rationale for this theocratic trend, while not originating with Cosmas, was synthesized and exaggerated in his works. Both philosophically and cartographically Cosmas' ideas were strictly dictated by his literal interpretation of the Bible. It has been estimated that between the years of 535 and 548 A.D., in the solitude of a Sinai cloister, Cosmas wrote, besides his memoirs, an explanation of the universe entitled *Topographia Christiana* [Christian Topography].

Below is the sketch of the grid as drawn by Cosmas wound 547-5413 CE in his manuscript *Christian Topography*. The inhabited earth is the rectangle enveloped by the blue oceans, oriented with north at the top. *Paradise* is in the East separated from the earth by a narrow stretch of land. The four principle winds are represented by colorful vignettes of horn blowing heads inside red circles, located in the surrounding ocean. The surrounding ocean itself is inscribed *OKEANOS* (Ocean) with large letters. The legends located at the top, inside the external landmass describes it as: *The region where people lived before the deluge, now inaccessible to humankind.*

Concerning the dimensions of the world Cosmas writes: "for if, on account of a miserable trade, men now try to go to the Seres, would they not much rather go far beyond, for the sake of Paradise, if there were any hope of reaching it?"



Cosmas Indicopleustes from a 7-8th century copy of the Christian Topography, Bibliotheca Apostolica, the Vatican, MS Vat. Gr.600, f.40v (#202)

Predicated upon the concept of a "flat earth" and oriented with North at the top and Paradise in the East (right) where the human race dwelt until the Flood when they were transported across the now impassable Ocean. We cannot return to Paradise, but the four rivers regularly flow from Paradise to this world by means of submarine passages

The central part of the rectangular landmass (the present) is surrounded by a likewise rectangular unnavigable *Oceanus* which, in turn, is surrounded by another earth or borderland, *Terra ultra Oceanum*, in which the *Paradise* of Adam was located and "where men lived before the Flood". Located in the eastern portion of this antediluvian 'borderland' or *Paradise* can be found a large rectangular lake, and from this the 'four sacred rivers' flow, somehow, through or under the *Oceanus* to the inhabited present world.

Of these the Pheisôn [Pison] is the river of India, which some call the Indus or Ganges. It flows down from regions in the interior, and falls by many mouths into the Indian Sea, enjoying all of the same products as the Nile, from crocodiles to lotus flowers . . . The Geôn [Gihon or Nile] again, which rises somewhere in Ethiopia and Egypt, and discharges its waters into our gulf by several mouths, while the Tigris and Euphrates, which have their sources in the regions of Parsarmenia, flow down to the Persian Gulf . . .

The four rivers of *Paradise* include:

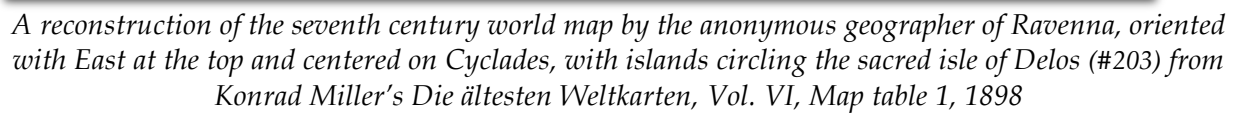
1. The Euphrates [*Phrath*], which flows from *Paradise*, passes through the outside world, sinking underground it emerges somewhere south of the Caspian and continues its flow to the Persian Gulf.
2. The Tigris [*Hiddekel*], which also flows from *Paradise*, going underground and emerging south of the Caspian, continuing into the Persian Gulf.
3. The *Phison* Biblical name for the Ganges or Indus, one of the four great rivers that flow from a source within *Paradise*: "*Et fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad inrigandum paradisum qui inde dividitur in quattuor capita, nomen uni Phison ipse est qui circuit omnem terram Evilat ubi nascitur aurum*" (Genesis, 2.10-11) [*And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold*]. Flowing out of *Paradise*, it crosses the lands external to the inhabited regions of the earth, passes under the surrounding Ocean and flows into the Arabian Sea,
4. The *Gihon* [the Nile], which traverses the land outside the known world approaching and crossing the surrounding Ocean from the south, eventually flowing into the Mediterranean.

In Cosmas' view, the tabernacle that God revealed to Moses on Sinai was an image of the world. As shown by the symbolism of the table in the tabernacle, the inhabited world of Cosmas is rectangular in form. But this earthly plane is not horizontal, rather it slopes up from southeast to northwest, so that the northern and western regions rise up like a wall. According to Cosmas, the inhabitable earth is surrounded by an ocean, beyond this there is a further land, which includes in particular *Paradise* in which God placed Adam. After the "original sin" Adam and his first descendants lived in another place on this same strip of land, but it was hard to till and was infested by wild beasts. These human beings lived there until the flood, the time when God saved Noah and his family by means of the ark, which took 150 days to cross the ocean and reach our earth. Ever since, "It has been impossible to cross the ocean, just as it is impossible for us to ascend to heaven as long as we are mortal." Although the earth that human beings now

inhabit and the land where they once lived and where *Paradise* is located are separated by an impassable ocean, the two remain linked by the four rivers “which the divine writings say emerge from *Paradise* and then, having crossed the ocean, spring up again on our earth.”

Cosmas' geography is unaffected by the miraculous origin of the rivers of *Paradise*; rather, he believes that their sources in the *oikoumene* are merely the points where they resurface after travelling through the Ocean. In effect he maintains a division between what could be explored and known, that is the *oikoumene*, and the miraculous, that is *Paradise*, placed beyond impassable *Ocean*. This clear separation is unusual in Late Antiquity. According to the Greek version of Genesis 2:8, *Paradise* was planted in the east. Although some of the Christian writers took *Paradise* to be allegorical, most understood it literally and believed that it was “under this very heaven in the east”. The fact that *Paradise* was hidden and inaccessible to men made any discussion of its location quite problematic. The issue was further complicated by the existence of the four rivers of *Paradise* (Genesis 2:10-14), which connected it with the *oikoumene*. Three of them: the Tigris, Euphrates and *Gheon*, were easily identified. The first two were called by their own names, while the identification of *Gheon* as the Nile was prompted by the fact that Greek translators rendered “mouth of Horus” in Jeremiah 2:18 as “waters of *Gheon*”. Identification of *Phison* brought more difficulty. Some of the Christian writers believed it to be the Danube, others identified it with the Ganges. Others still made double-identifications: Pseudo-Caesarius believed *Phison* to be the Danube, which was the same as the Indus, and Epiphanius thought *Phison* to be the Indus, which was the same as the Ganges. At the same time it was generally understood that the Tigris and Euphrates have their sources in Armenia, while the Nile flowed from somewhere in Ethiopia. In response to the discrepancy between this information and the theory that the rivers originated in *Paradise*, writers took various attitudes. Some, like Isidore (#205), disregarded geographical knowledge where it contradicted the Scriptures, or suggested that despite identity of names Euphrates and Tigris are not the real rivers of *Paradise*. But many writers opted for a solution close to that described by Cosmas, and they pictured the rivers of *Paradise* as flowing underground for the initial part of their course.

We should bear in mind that the idea of a river flowing underground and resurfacing again appears very frequently in ancient sources. Some rivers are described as travelling not only underground, but also through a sea without mingling their waters with it.





Detail showing Paradise at the top (East) and the four sacred rivers

Scafi states that the new geographical notion of *Eden* was born out of Augustine's speculations on eternity and time and out of his reading of the *Paradise* narrative as a real historical event. The question of the whereabouts of the *Garden*, of secondary importance for Augustine, caught the imagination of later biblical exegetes who drew out of Augustine's writings the latent geographical discourse and who named the place where map-makers could put *Paradise*. According to Scafi, the grounds for identifying the site of the earthly *Paradise* rested on the *Vetus Latina* (the old Latin translation of the Hebrew text of *Genesis*), which had explained that *Paradise* had been planted not 'from the beginning' - as Jerome rendered it in the *Vulgate* - but 'in the east.' From among the most influential of the early medieval scholars who discussed *Paradise* and who distilled Augustine's theories for posterity, Scafi selects the following: Isidore of Seville, Bede the Northumbrian scholar, the unnamed compilers of the *Glossa ordinaria* (the standard medieval commentary on the Bible), and the commentator Peter Lombard. Scafi says that it was these clerics' naming of the place that in due course guided the compilers of maps where the sign for the *Garden of Eden* should be placed on their representations of the world.

The *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX* by a seventh century Bishop of Seville (Spain), St. Isidore, consists of 20 Books on 175 leaves, including a *mappamundi*, and was meant to be an encyclopedia that summed up the knowledge accumulated by early seventh century Europe (#205).

Interestingly, Isidore was the first writer to clearly define the Mediterranean by that proper name. Proceeding to a systematic description of the countries of the world, of Asia Isidore says that it is bounded in the east by *Lake Maeotis* [Sea of Azov] and the river *Tanais* [the river Don].

It contains many provinces and districts whose names and geographical situations I will briefly describe, beginning from Paradise . . . Paradise is a place lying in the eastern parts whose name is translated out of the Greek into Latin as *hortus* [i.e., garden]. It is called in the Hebrew tongue *Eden*, which is translated as *Delicate* [i.e., place of luxury or delight]. Uniting these two gives us *Garden of Delight*; for it is planted with every kind of wood and fruit-bearing tree, having also the tree of life. There is neither cold nor heat but a continual spring temperature. From the middle of the Garden a spring gushes forth to water the whole grove and, dividing up, it provides the source of four rivers [see #205C and Q]. Approach to this place was barred to man after his sin, for now it is hedged about

on all sides by a sword-like flame [*romphaea flamma*], that is to say that it is surrounded by a wall of fire that reaches almost to the sky.

This obvious Biblical note coming so early in the topographical section of the treatise might lead the reader to expect its continuance in subsequent chapters; but apart from one or two entirely understandable references to Biblical lore - *Scythia and Gothia also are said to have been named by Magog, son of Japhet and the River Ganges which sacred scripture calls Phison, flows down from Paradise to the realms of India* - only the most sparing use of this source is made. By far the greatest percentage of Isidore's material is culled from "pagan" (i.e., non-Christian) sources; indeed much of his geography might have been written by late classical writers such as Mela and Solinus. His treatment of the habitable earth enables one to arrive fairly easily at the scope of his knowledge.

As both Delumeau and Scafi point out, in the West, where St. Augustine was the dominant influence, Isidore of Seville, one of the shapers of the medieval mind, played an essential role in regard to the location both of the earthly paradise and of other wonderful lands that might to be thought to resemble *Paradise*. Isidore distinguishes two *Paradises*: one is "earthly," and our first parents were placed in it; the other is "heavenly" and is the place where the souls of the just await the resurrection. When writing of the geography of Asia, Isidore has this to say of the earthly paradise:

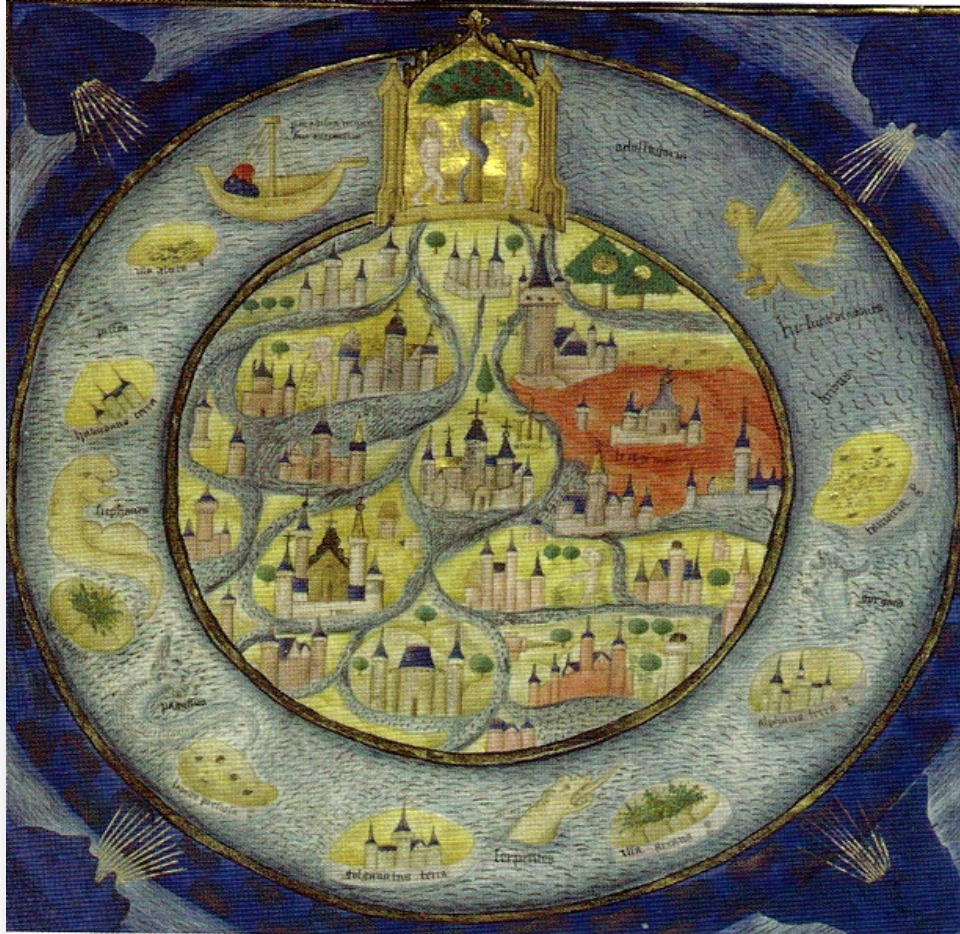
[Asia] includes many provinces and regions whose names and locations I shall list briefly, beginning with paradise. Paradise is a place in the east, a Greek name which means *bortus* ["garden"] in Latin. In Hebrew it is called Eden, a word which in Latin means *deliciae* ["delights"]. The two words together give *hortus deliciarum*. This garden has all sorts of trees, especially fruit trees, and also contains the tree of life. Cold and scorching heat are unknown there; the air is always mild [a theme of the ancients when describing the golden age or the Happy Isles]. In its midst is a spring that irrigates the entire garden and gives rise to four rivers. Ever since man's sin, access to this place has been barred to humanity. It is surrounded on all sides by a flame that resembles a two-edged sword, that is, by a wall of fire whose flames rise as high as heaven. One of the cherubim ... has been ordered to bar the entrance to paradise against every spirit and all flesh

The Augustinian message, which can be traced from Isidore of Seville to St. Thomas Aquinas, was of the utmost importance in the West in lending credibility to *Paradise* as a "corporeal" reality in which Adam and Eve were placed. Quite logically, then, these same writers agree that the lost paradise still exists but is barred to humanity.

Paradise as a Garden: The quest for the most privileged place to live is usually associated with the idea of *Paradise*. However, the conventional understanding of the word *Paradise* as the sacred garden does not resemble any earthly dimension. While through these searches the idea of the terrestrial *Paradise* has been differentiated from its celestial image, these two dimensions still overlap in some crucial narratives. The term *Paradise* occurs only three times in the biblical *New Testament*: first in *Luke 23:43*, "*And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to you: This day you shall be with me in paradise.*" The second one is in the second *Corinthians*, St. Paul describing one of his ecstasies tells his readers that he was "*caught up into paradise*" and the third appearance is in the *Apocalypse 2:7*, where St. John, receiving in vision a Divine message for the "*angel of the church of Ephesus*", hears these words: "*To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God.*" The first two are explicitly associated with the concept of heaven and

they apparently replaced the term, however the third occurrence signifies the image of the 'Garden of Eden' as it appears in the.

The very root of the word *pairi-daêzā* nevertheless, does not carry any image of a holy secured garden. However, it is extensively promoted and supported by religious beliefs. Jewish, Christian and Islamic texts have signified *Paradise* as the utmost sacred and protected place. It has been mostly described as the place that has been promised to the righteous and faithful people as the reward after their death. These narratives employ the most ambitious earthly elements to illustrate the heavenly scene, offering geographical codes which indicate some possible historical locations in which the holy garden was actualized.



World map, from Jean Mansel, *La Fleur des histoires*. France, c.1460-70. 38 X 28 cm. Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, MS 9260, fol. 11r. The east-orientated map features the inhabited earth crowned by the earthly paradise represented by Adam and Eve, the serpent and the Tree of Life (#205)

While there never has been any proof for the actual geographical location of the *Garden of Eden*, according to some of the description, especially in the Old Testament, there have been some hypotheses searching for the exact geographical location of the *Terrestrial Paradise* or *Garden of Eden*. Four rivers have been directly addressed as the elements of the *Garden of Eden*: Tigris (Dijlah), Euphrates (Al-Furat), Gihon (Karun) and Pishon (Book of Genesis 2:10-14).

Therefore some places have been associated with this description: the Northern shore of the Persian Gulf, the Island of Bahrain, the cities of Tabriz and Jerusalem, the Parthian/Sassanid city of Ctesiphon and later the city of Baghdad have accordingly been located there.

In medieval travelogues, however, this motif appears much less frequently and the notions of what it may look like to some extent vary. The traveling Franciscan friars John Plano of Carpini and William of Rubruck make no reference to *Paradise* on earth at all, which seems to suggest that it did not even occur to them that they could come anywhere near it. After all, given the hardship they report having faced on the way, they could have called their travels a “road to hell” rather than a journey to Paradise. Odoric of Pordenone and Marco Polo do not mention any eastern Paradise either, although they do not shy away from other motifs of the medieval mythology. The letters written by Montecorvino show that he reflected on this notion, but despite all his effort had to admit he was not able to find out anything about this eastern *Paradise* (*Sinica Franciscana*:342).

Jordanus Catalanus briefly discusses *Paradise* in a section of his work devoted to a mythical land he calls *India Tertia*. This textual framing of *Paradise* is of major significance, as at the beginning of the chapter Jordanus states he did not visit *India Tertia* himself, only learned about the region from trustworthy persons (*Mirabilia Descripta*:134). Jordanus says that *Paradise* is situated between *India Tertia* and Ethiopia and that there are four rivers flowing from paradise, bringing with them gold and precious stones (*Mirabilia Descripta*:136). Living around one of the rivers are dragons, whose heads are topped with shiny carbuncles. Because of their large weight, the dragons tend to fall into that river, an event local people eagerly await; after seventy days only bones are left of a fallen dragon, after which time people take the carbuncle from the dragon’s skeleton and bring it to Prester John, the king of Ethiopia (*Mirabilia Descripta*:134).

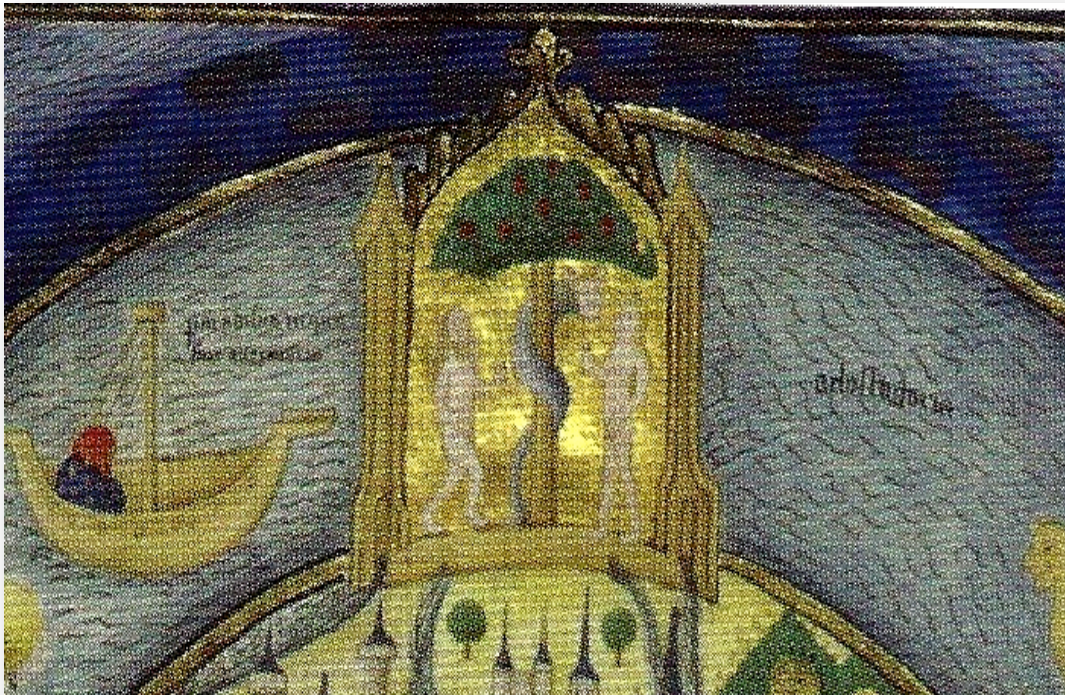
While Jordanus’ *Paradise* is part of the mythical *India Tertia*, in Marignola’s chronicle the account of *Paradise* is directly connected with his exposition on early biblical history: “God planted paradise at the beginning, in the eastern part, this place beyond India is called Eden.” Marignola is the only one of the travelers under discussion who discusses *Paradise* in more detail and who believes that he stood in its immediate proximity. He reports having erected a stone column with an inscription, a cross and his as well as the pope’s coats of arms “in the corner of the world” and “over against Paradise”. This “corner of the world” is believed to be the southernmost tip of India, Kanyakumari. According to his further description, *Paradise* is located 40 Italian miles off the coast of Sri Lanka, “opposite a glorious mountain,” i.e. opposite *Adam’s Peak* (2,243 m). He claims that according to the locals one can hear the sound of falling water coming from *Paradise*. Marignola’s *Paradise* is surrounded by the ocean and located beyond “Columbine India” as the most elevated place on earth, touching the Moon’s sphere:

Now that fountain cometh down from the mount and falleth into a lake, which is called by the philosophers Euphirattes. Here it passes under another water which is turbid, and issues forth on the other side, where it divides into four rivers which pass through Seyllan...

So far Marignola’s description is in line with the notions of *Paradise* common in his time, with the exception of its localization “opposite Sri Lanka.” Drawing on personal experience, the chronicler slightly modified the list of four paradisiacal rivers, stating they were the Nile, the Yellow River, the Tigris and the Euphrates. He listed the Chinese river instead of Ganges or Indus, which were then more commonly identified with the biblical river of *Pishon* (Delumeau 2000:45), because he had seen the mighty Yellow River with an abundance of gold and silk on its banks with his own eyes. Marignola mentions in several other places in his chronicle that he

came close to *Paradise*, namely during his description of a Buddhist monastery under *Adam's Peak*. He describes the mountain as “perhaps after *Paradise* the highest mountain on the face of the earth” and as a place where Adam first descended upon his expulsion from *Paradise*.

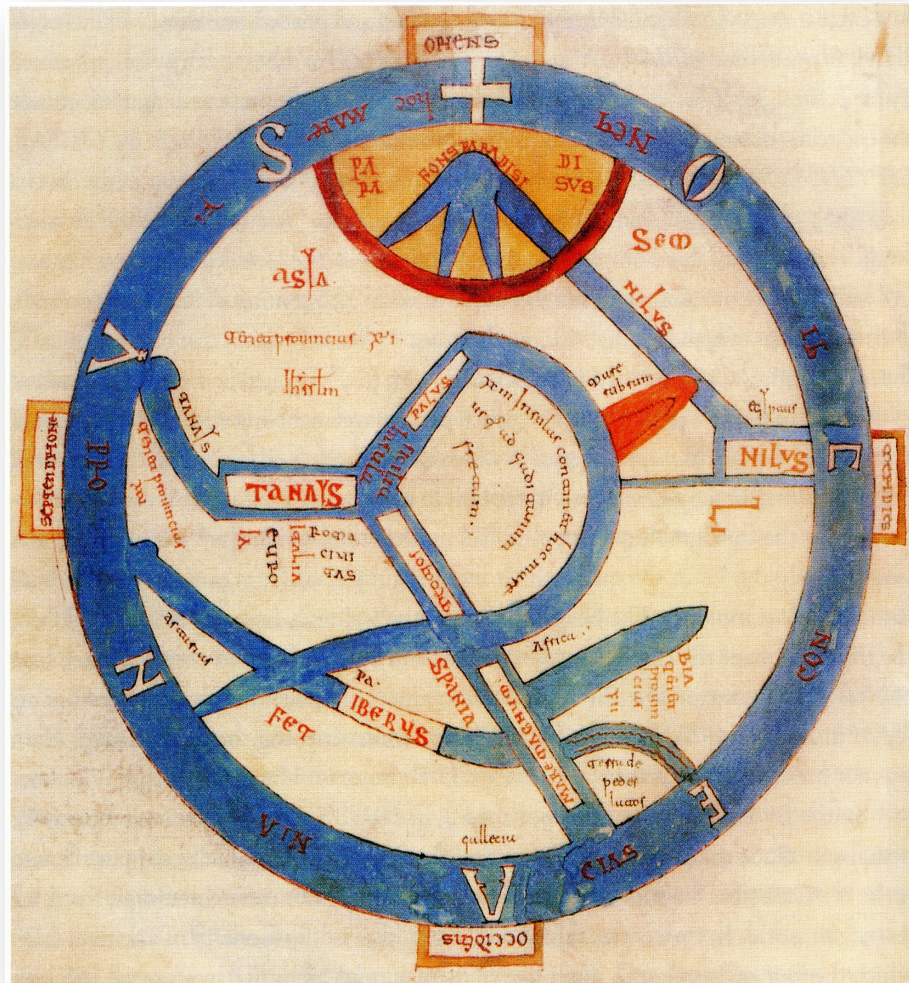
If we summarize the different travelers' notions of the earthly *Paradise* “in the East”, we will find rather dissimilar approaches. Marignola locates *Paradise* in the vicinity of Sri Lanka and uses the motif to further his own travel writing within his history work. Jordanus removes *Paradise* to *India Tertia*, which in his narrative represents an amalgam of traditional *topoi* and which is clearly distinct from the more realistic passages devoted to *India Minor* [northwestern India] and *India Major* [southern India and countries further to the east]. Neither Rubruck and Carpini, who were sent as envoys to Mongolia, nor Odoric and Polo, who focused their attention primarily on China, say anything about *Paradise*. Only Montecorvino, who travelled through a major part of Asia, including both India and China, admits that he enquired about *Paradise*, but with no success (*Sinica Franciscana*:342).



In about 1446-1451 Jean Mansel composed a universal history titled *La fleur des histoires*, and then in the 1460s wrote a longer version of the same work. A famous and often reproduced world map in a manuscript of the short version of Mansel's book, which was probably made by Simom Marmion in about 1460, illustrates the division of the world among the three sons of Noah. Another world map in a manuscript of the long version of the book, this one created c.1480, for this map contains large and prominent sea monsters in the circumfluent ocean. The map (shown below) is in a chapter on the “Provinces du monde,” but there is almost no connection between the map and the list of provinces in the chapter. Adam, Eve, and the serpent are in *Eden* at the top (east) of the map, with the rivers of *Paradise* flowing downward from it to the west (the river Jordan is labeled). At the apex of the circular terrestrial landmass, in the distant east, is *Paradise*. Adam and Eve, the tree and the serpent are shown within an ornate architectural frame, as if to emphasize the uniqueness and splendor of the Garden. From *Paradise* the four rivers flow out to give life to the earth and to establish a mysterious yet

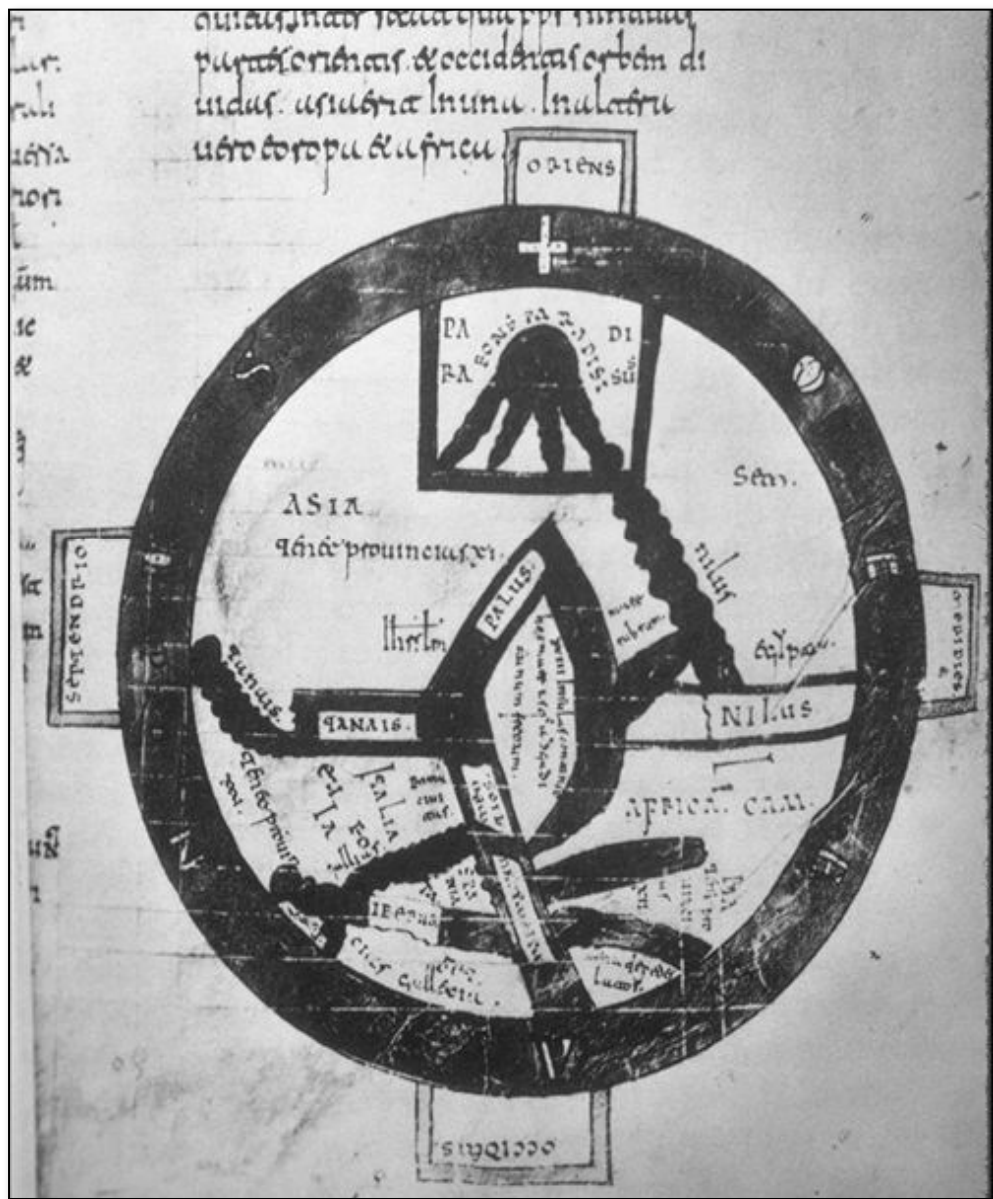
material connection between paradise and the human realm. In his book, Mansel described *Paradise* as a wonderful region surpassing all other earthly lands, fit for man's initial perfection, surrounded by a wall of fire and situated on an exceptionally high mountain that reached the sphere of the moon.

For a more in-depth discussion of T-O maps derived from St. Isidore can be found in #205 monograph on this website.



Map of the Etymologiae of Sancha and Sancho, 1047, Real Biblioteca of the Monasterio de El Escorial, Madrid Ms. I.3, fol. 177v (#205C2)

Following the description of the *Etymologiae* of Isidore, it shows the world in a circular shape, surrounded by the encircling ocean and divided into three continents – ASYA, EUROPA and LIBIA (i.e. Africa). The map is oriented to the east, as may be appreciated by the positioning of Asia in the upper portion, and as stated in the bracketed captions, outside the encircling ocean, which refer to the cardinal points: ORIENS, MERIDIES, OCCIDENS, SEPTENDRIONE. In the far east of the world appears the PARADISUS, inscribed in a red semicircle, perhaps to allude to the barrier of fire of the “flaming sword”, which God put there to make it inaccessible. Its surface is in yellow polychromy, thus differentiating it from the rest of the world. In the centre is the fons paradisi, that is, the fountain of Paradise, from which the four rivers emanate. Only one of them appears identified by its name, Nilus [the Nile], which traditionally, according to St Isidore in his *Etymologiae* (XIII, 21, 7-10) was associated with the Gihon of the biblical texts. This river crosses over the borders of the Earthly Paradise in order to join up with the Nile that separates Asia from Africa.



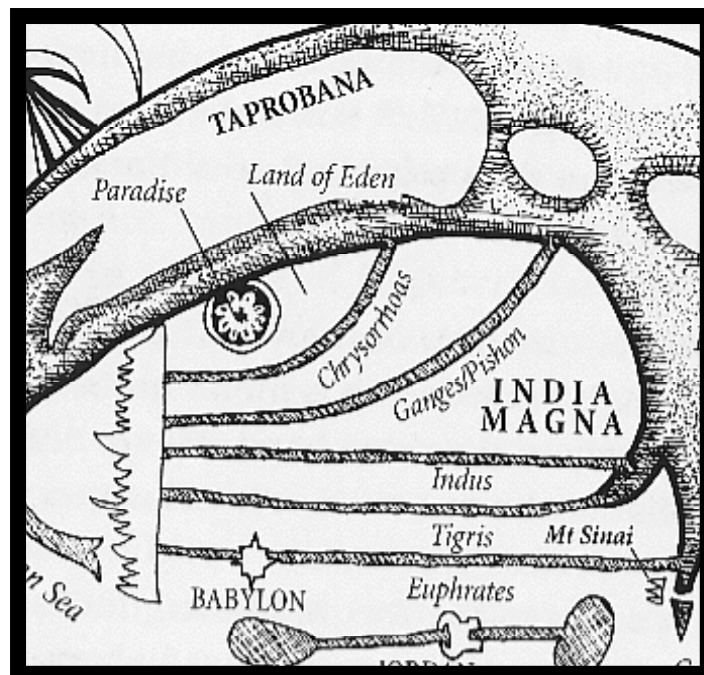
T-O map from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiarum*, 10th century, 11.5 cm diameter (#205C)
 Showing Paradise at the top (East) and the four sacred rivers

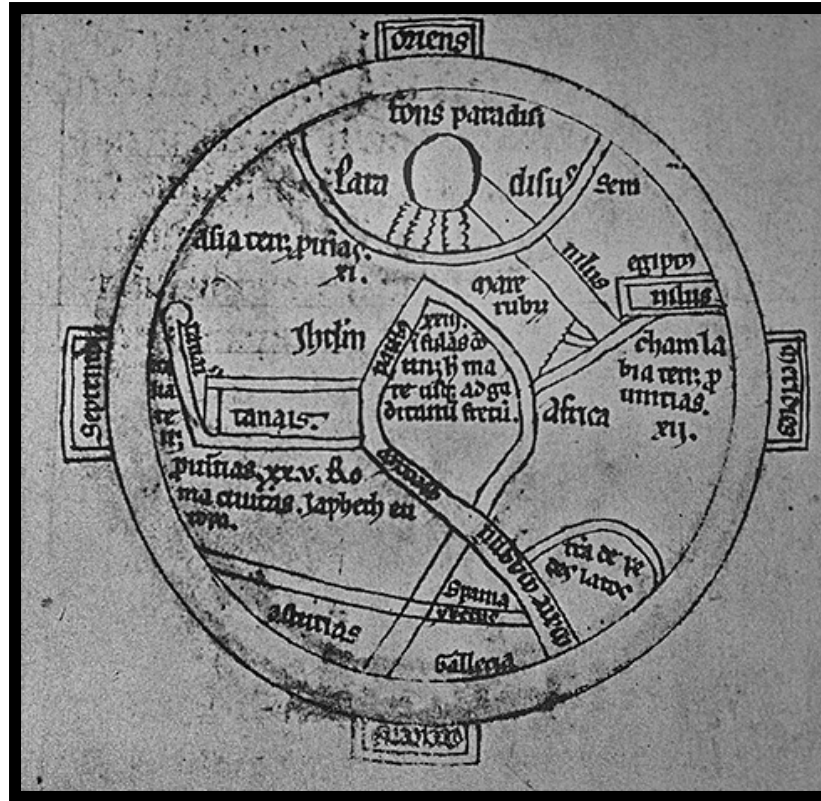


The "Vatican T-O", an eighth century T-O map bound with Isidore's *Etymologiarum*, 21 x 14.5 cm. One of the oldest detailed world maps, placed with a group of computus materials. It shows the inhabited continents as a circle surrounded by the Ocean. To the southwest of Africa is the island which has been interpreted as a vestigial fourth continent. Paradisus is represented by a rosette in the Terra Garden of the Far East. Two apparent islands in the northwest are both labeled with the names of seas: 'mare mortun' and 'oceanus occiduus' [dead sea, or sea of the dead, and western ocean]. Oriented with East at the top. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Lat. 6018, ff 63^v-64 (#205M)

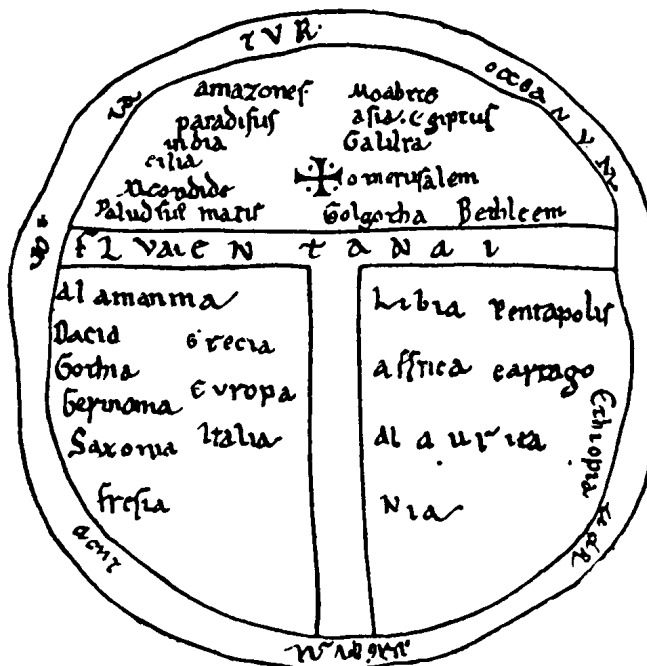


Detail: Terra Eden [Paradise] is represented by a rosette at the top (East) of the map; further north (on the left) a saw-toothed Mt. Taurus range gives rise to five rivers: the Ganges, Tigris, Euphrates, Indus and Crisacoras

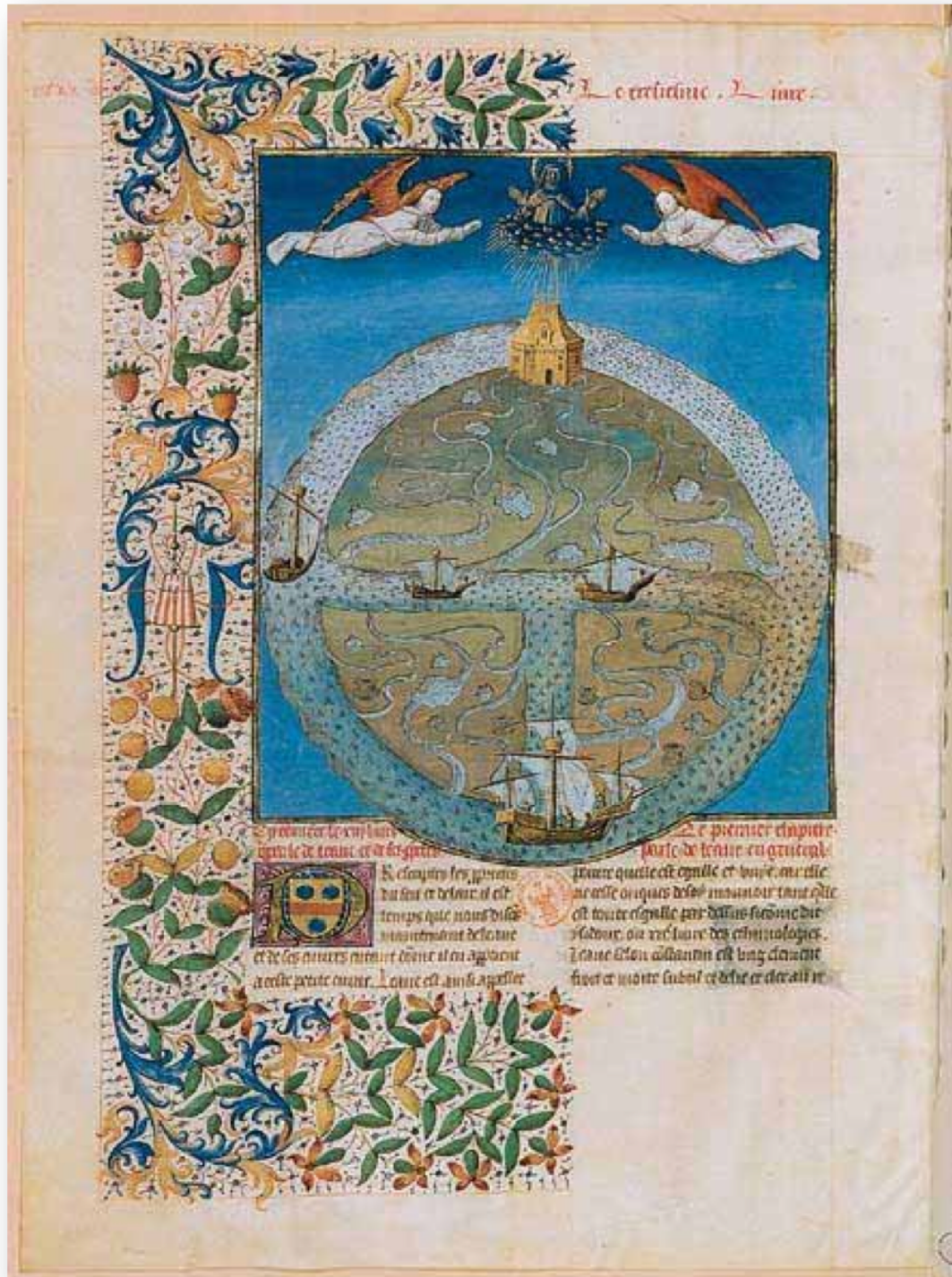




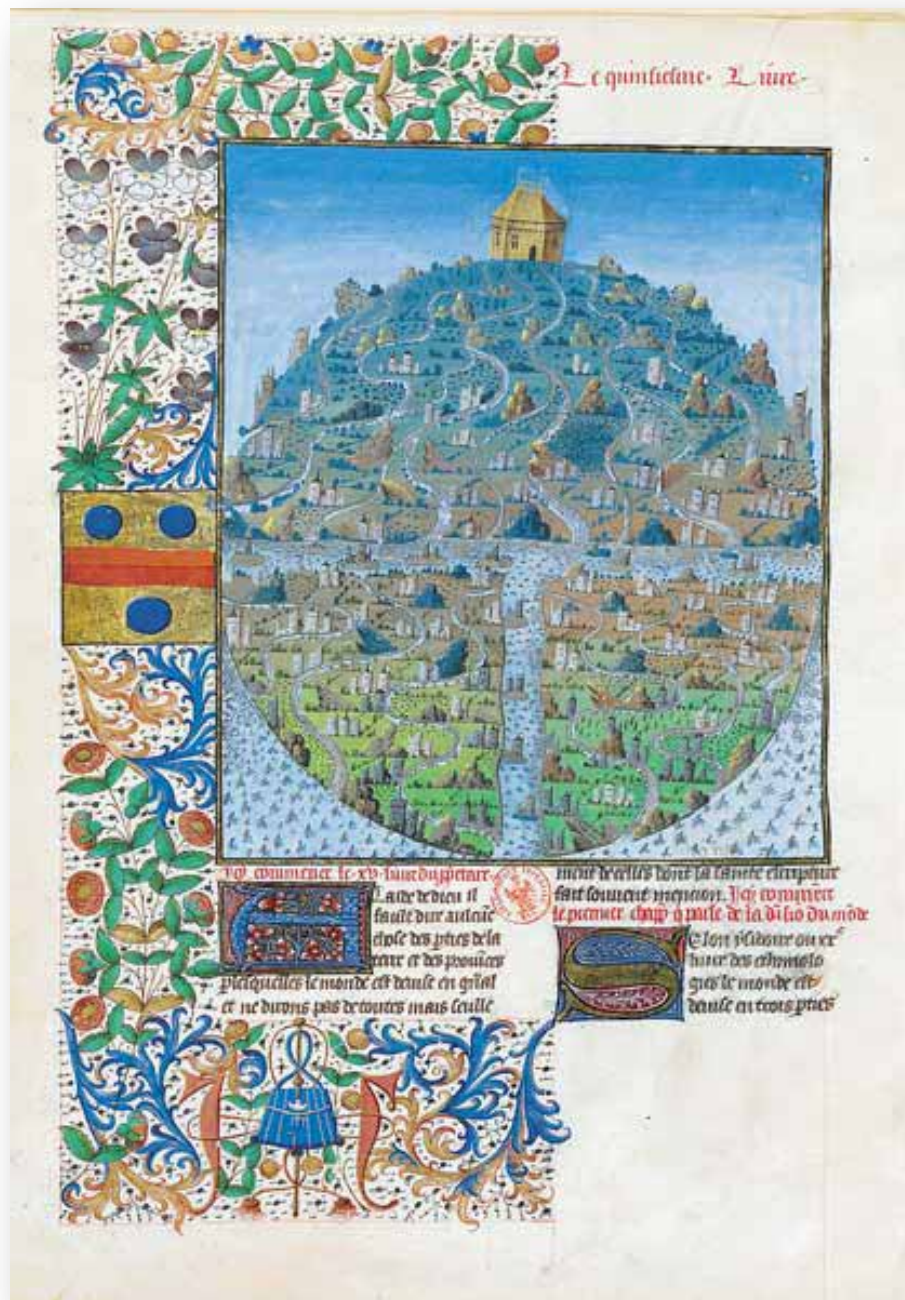
branch.



Ninth century T-O map from Strasburg MS (#205I) showing Paradisus in Asia



Livre des proprietes des choses, 42 x 32.5 cm, Jean Corbechon, 1479-80 (#205Z4)
 BnF, Manuscripts (Fr 9140 fol. 226v). An elaborate T-O map, oriented to the East, showing Paradise at the top (East) as a large castle with the four sacred rivers flowing out of it.



Barthélemy l'Anglais, *Livre des propriétés des choses*. Jean Corbechon, 1372. Copié par Gilles Gracien et illustré par Evrard d'Espingues pour Jean Du Mas, seigneur de l'Isle-Adam, Ahun (Marche), 1479-1480. Manuscrit sur parchemin, (393 feuillets, 40.5 x 30 cm)

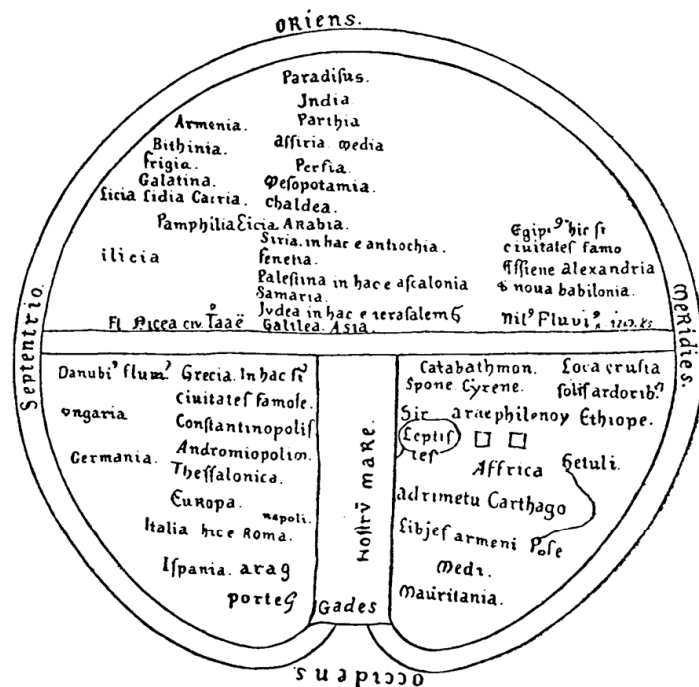
BnF, Manuscrits (Fr 9140 fol. 243v). #205Z3. Another elaborate T-O map of the world with Paradise at the top (East) and the four sacred rivers



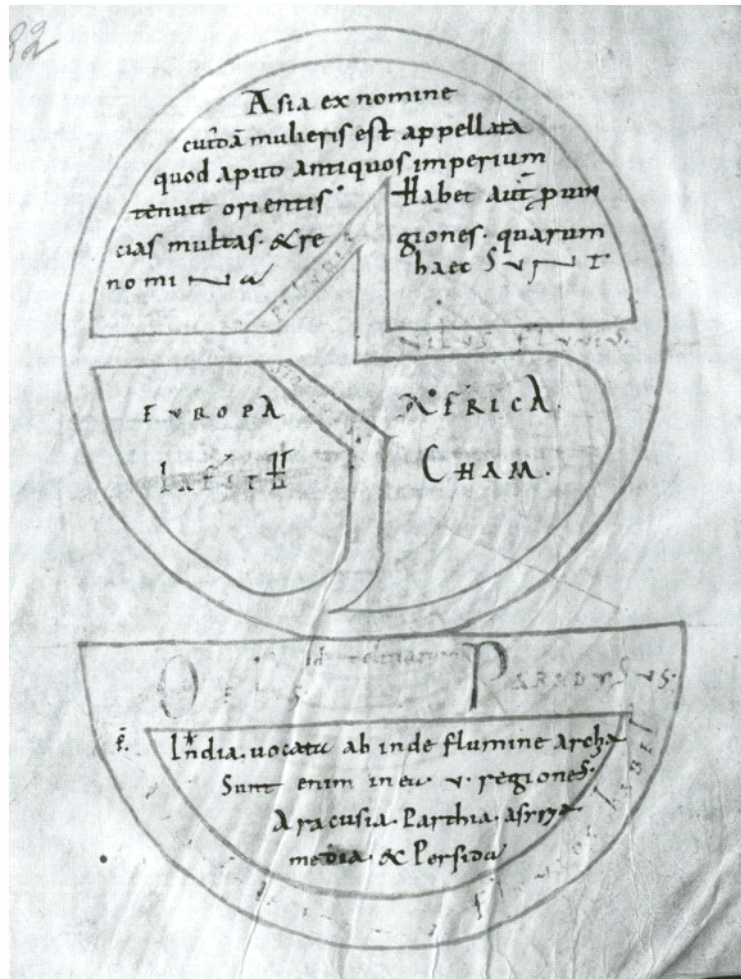
An illuminated page from a manuscript of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. Ile de France or Normandy, c.1473-80. 46.5 x 31 cm. Macon, Bibliotheque Municipale, MS Franc. 2, fol. 19r.

The Fall is taking place in the Garden of Eden (in the farthest east of the east-orientated world map in the center). Outside paradise, Eve is portrayed looking after her two sons, and Adam is shown digging. Cain is seen on the left killing Abel; on the right he is building the first city in the world (Enoch); in the part of the map that would correspond to Europe (lower left), he leads a fugitive and nomadic life among wild beasts and demons until he is killed, in the part of the map that would correspond to Africa, by Lamech.

Above the map is Christ's Second Coming. Flanking the map on the right is a scene from Eden, with the rivers that are the source of life, animals peacefully grazing, and the creation of Eve. Below, Augustine comments on the Bible before a group of scholars who are quoting from the Holy Scriptures. On the left is a fool with the inscription from Psalm 80.16 [81.15]: "The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him". At the bottom left of the page, Augustine is responding to a group of philosophers by reasserting the uniqueness of the creation of the world by God, a point confirmed by another figure of Augustine in the historiated initial on the same page.



13th century T-O map, Deventer, Athenaeum Bibliothek, MS I, 81 (old 1791), fol. 1R (#205II)



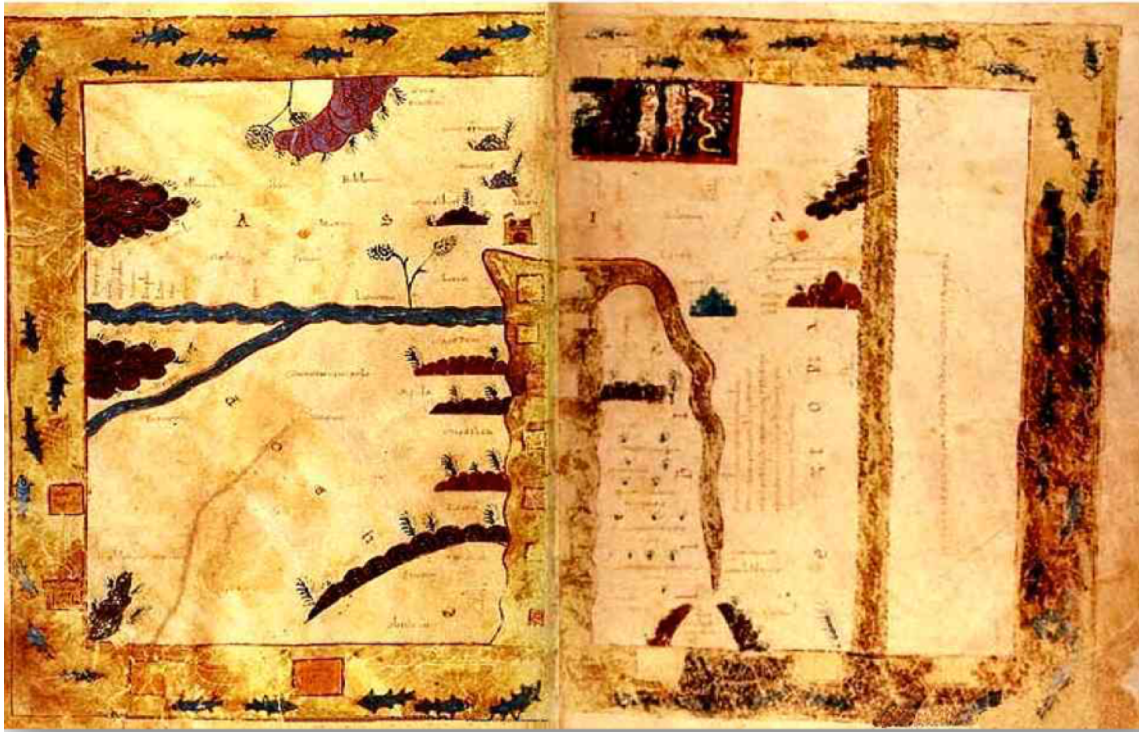
T-O map showing a fourth continent (Antipode), 11 cm diameter (#205KK)

Stiftsbibliothek, Codex Eins. 263 [973], fol. 182r, Einsiedeln

Isidore summarized thinking about this southern continent, asserting the existence of a fourth continent in addition to Europe, Africa, and Asia, a continent beyond the ocean to the south, unknown to us because of the heat of the equatorial regions, in which continent the fabulous race called the antipodes was said to dwell, along with *Orbis Paradisus* (14.5.17). In another passage (11.3.24) Isidore says that the antipodes are a race in Africa with their feet pointing backwards, each with eight toes – curiously converting the antipodes into a monstrous race.

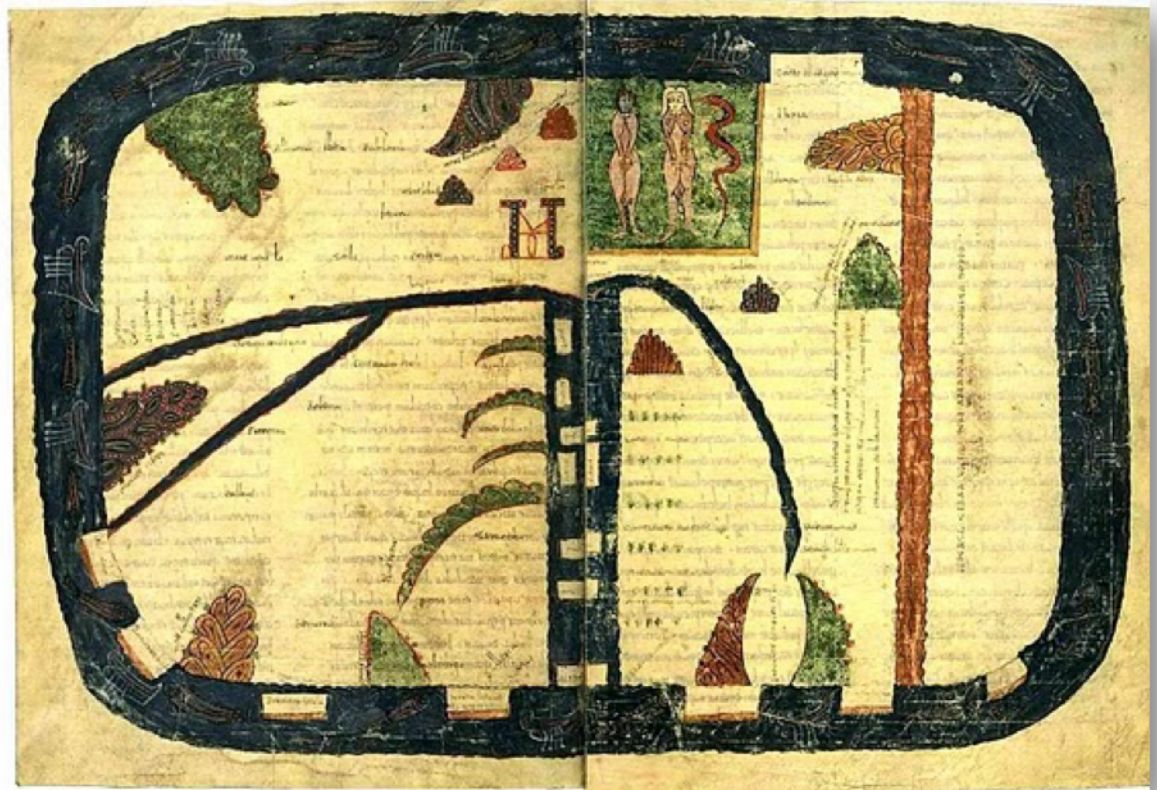
Like the T-O maps, the next set of exemplar maps are also part of a “family” of maps known as the *Beatus Family* (see monograph #207). This family of maps was developed from the eighth to the 13th century. It is probable that on the original *Beatus mappa mundi* both the four sacred rivers and the *Ancestors of Mankind* were depicted, as on the ‘family’ of maps that are associated with Henry of Mainz, a.k.a. Sawley (#215, #225, #226). The four rivers of *Paradise* are a reference to *Genesis ii*, 11-14. The first three rivers are usually identified with the Indus or Ganges, the Nile, and the Tigris. Also, in the *Beatus mappae mundi*, there is no clear evidence of a dependence on the T-O design so dominant during this period of cartography. The four sacred rivers and/or Adam and Eve are depicted prominently in the East on *Beatus* maps. Scafi states that *Beatus’* map was not a map of the world that happened to feature the earthly *Paradise*, but a map of the world that depicted heaven on earth.

One feature of the *El Burgo de Osma* Beatus map, a *Paradise* with four rivers radiating toward the four corners of a rectangle, contrasts conspicuously with the image of *Paradise* in the *Beatus Family II* maps, where Adam and Eve stand beside a tree. The *Oña* Beatus map employs the same scheme as the *El Burgo de Osma*, but *Paris II* Beatus (Nouv. acq. lat. 1366) has a circular *Paradise* with meandering rivers, and the *Lorvão* Beatus a small half circle with no rivers. Thus the *Beatus Family I* maps fail to agree on the emblem of *Paradise* but are unanimous in excluding Adam and Eve. Which type of *Paradise* - Adam and Eve or the four rivers - stems from the archetype? In favor of the four-river scheme is its consistency as a geographical feature with a map setting. Moreover, *Isidoran* maps of the so-called Y-O type seen in the 10th century copies described in monograph #205 represent *Paradise* as a four-river emblem, albeit descending rather than radiating. At the same time, the *Osma* Beatus map betrays in many places an intelligent, even erudite, designer, and the very consistency of the four-river scheme may have recommended its introduction to Martinus, its painter. In favor of the priority of the Adam and Eve type of *Paradise* is the fact that the apostles' missions were the result of the transgression of Adam and Eve, who stand in shame on the Beatus maps.



The Escalada, a.k.a. Ashburnham, Morgan 644, New York I, and/or Magius, Beatus mappamundi, 926 A.D., 51 x 36 cm (20 x 14 inches) #207.2

The depiction of the Earthly Paradise, labeled Paradisus, and the act of Original Sin is initiated in the Escalada mappa mundi. Adam and Eve are portrayed, along with the serpent wound around the red Tree of Life (shown baring fruit) and the red Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (similar to a sorghum tree) is to the right of Adam.



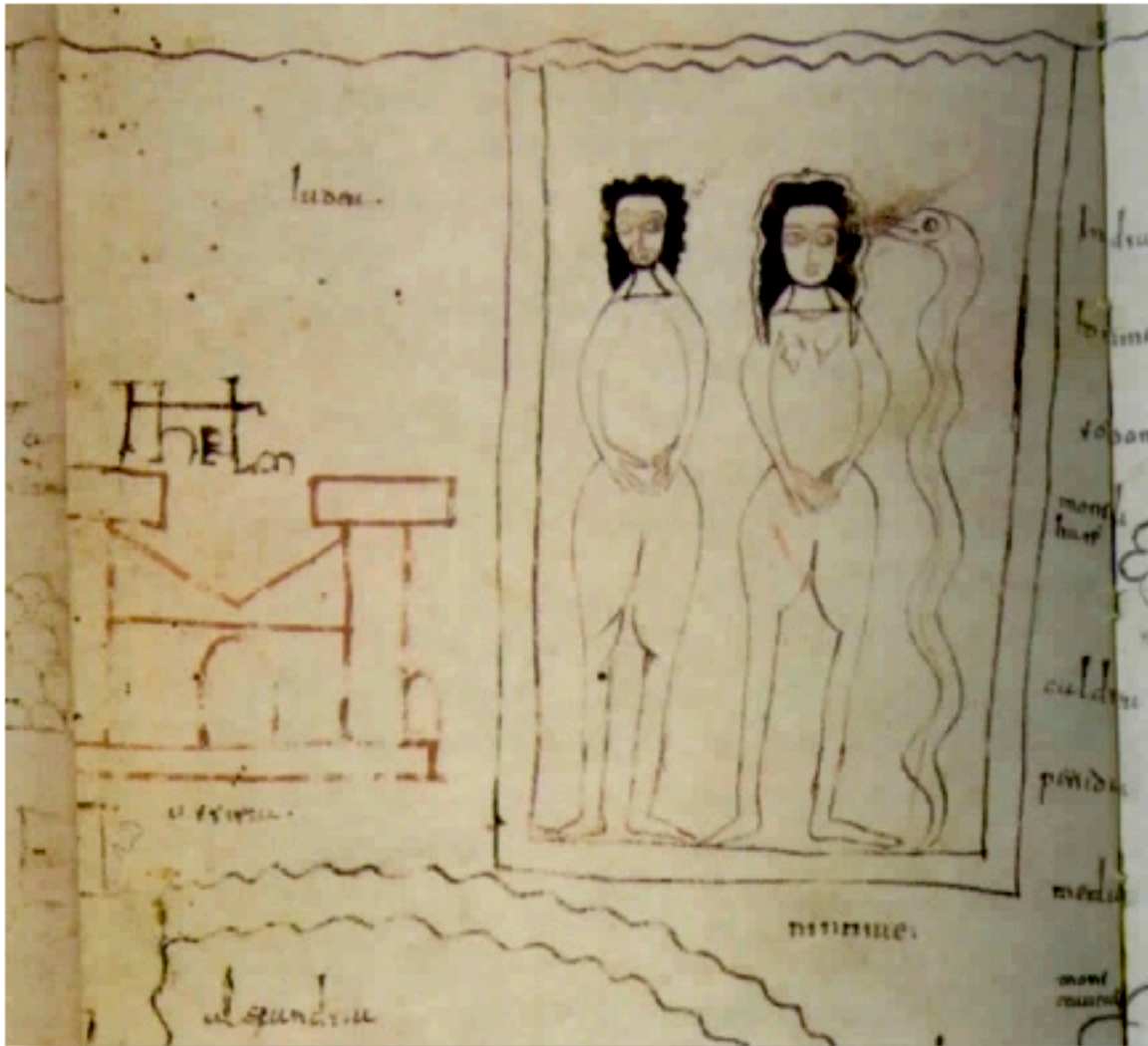
The Valcavado Beatus derivative, ca. 970, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS. 1789, fols. 36v-37, Valladolid, Spain. Paradise is illustrated with Adam and Eve and a serpent that appears to be floating in air. (#207.4)





The Girona Beatus mappamundi, ca. 975, Museo de la Catedral, MS. 10, Girona, Spain

In the *Earthly Paradise* on the *Girona Beatus* the background is colored green to allude to a luxuriant paradisiacal garden and the serpent is no longer coiling about a tree but around a support structure. As in most of the *Beatus* maps Adam is portrayed on the left side, and Adam and Eve cover their groin areas with their hands indicative of the fact that the “original sin” has already been committed as explained in *Genesis* along with the free-standing/floating-in-air serpent, but without the *Tree of Knowledge/Tree of Life*. One might also point out that, aside from the physical features of mountains and rivers, this illustration is the only one on the *Girona* map. Next to this illustration is the Mount of Lebanon that divides the River Jordan into two branches. (#207.6)



Detail of the Urgell Beatus mappa mundi showing the Earthly Paradise, Adam and Eve, the serpent and Jerusalem drawn in red on the left. (#207.8)



Detail from the *Fernando I & Sancha*, a.k.a *Madrid* or *Facundus Beatus*. (#207.11)

Next to this structure is, again, the framed picture of Adam and Eve using leaves to cover their groin area, indicating that the “original sin” has already been committed as is explained in *Genesis*. Adjacent to them is the red-fruited *Tree of Knowledge* and the coiled serpent to the right of Eve and a similar one, the *Tree of Life*, to the left of Adam. The serpent speaks into Eve’s ear; Adam and Eve appear in a frontal position; Eve’s breasts are reduced to circles, and they have parallel lines drawn to create the impression of shading and volume on their bodies.

The *Earthly Paradise* is also isolated and access to it was impossible, and hence it was named *hortus conclusus* [enclosed garden]. Except in the map of *Saint-Sever*, which resorts to an orographic solution, the maps of the *Beatus* codices solve the depiction of the barrier to *Paradise* by means of a surrounding frame-like railing, which in turn is the mechanism by which it acquires a square, rectangular or semicircular shape. We are seeing, then, a stylized depiction of its enclosure by a simple gold rectangular frame. The representation of Adam and Eve on medieval maps highlights the moment of their Fall, regarded as the first ‘historical’ event and the temporal and moral barrier that, for medieval Christians, barred mankind from re-entering the early *Paradise*.



The 11th century Saint Sever Beatus mappamundi #207.13

The depiction of the Garden of Eden on the St Sever mappamundi is a feature that this map has in common with most of the other Beatus mappae mundi. This vignette of Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge is placed at the top of the map (East) in the representation of the Earthly Paradise. Here Eve (on the right) is in the very act of plucking the fatal apple, while Adam stands by and the serpent is wound around the tree trunk. Unique to the Saint-Sever map with respect to the other Beatus mappae mundi, is the separation of the Earthly Paradise from the rest of the world by using the more natural barrier of mountain ranges.

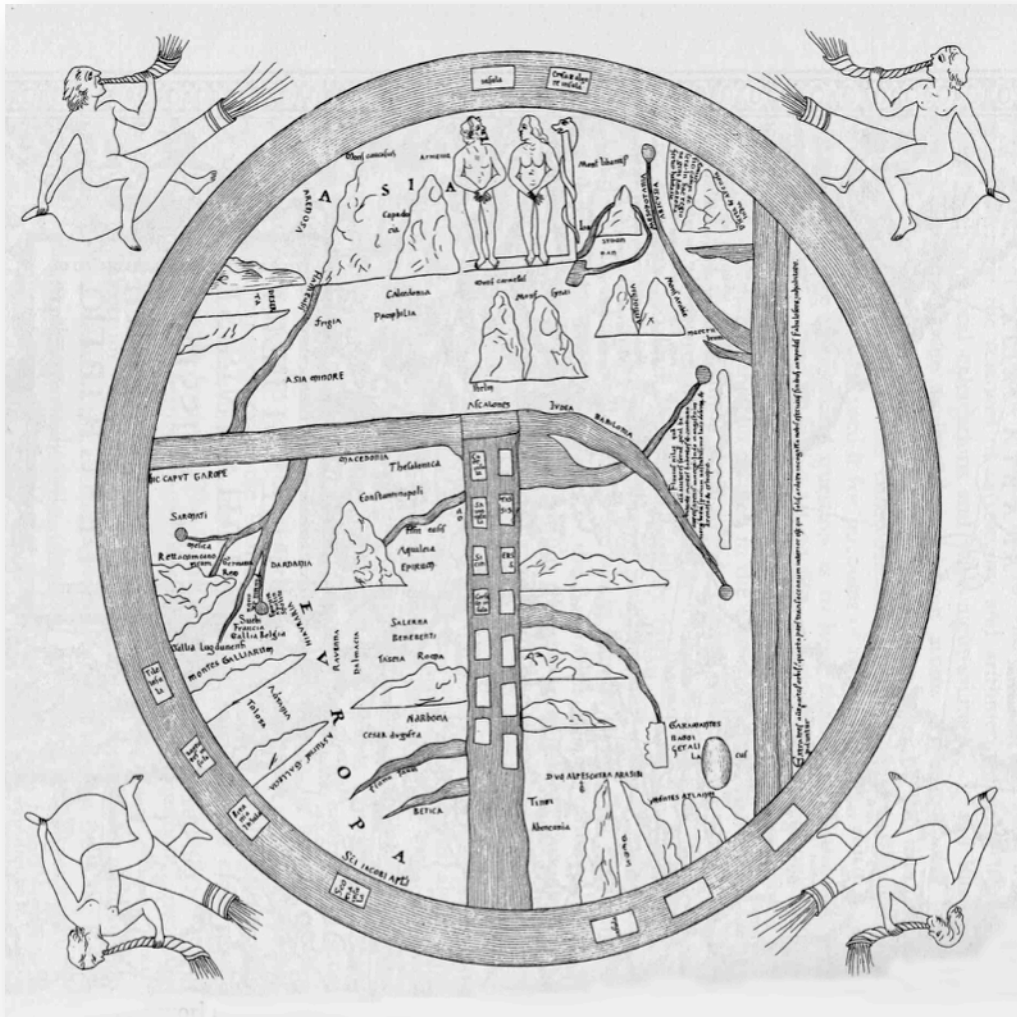




El Burgo de Osma, 1086, Archivo de la Catedral Cod. 1, ff.34v-35 [I] #207.14

Although the *El Burgo de Osma* map is devoid of the usually dominant illustration of Adam and Eve, in their place the cartographer has represented *Paradise* simply by a square with the 'springs' of the four sacred rivers. The *Earthly Paradise* is a place that is built into the cartographic image of the world, because in the Middle Ages there was still a theological tradition that it existed on earth, even though it was inaccessible. One of the issues of major transcendence was its whereabouts. *Paradise* had been positioned in many different places in the world, at the four cardinal points; however, the most oft-repeated location was in the East, due to the symbolic value given to it by the Christian mediaeval mentality, as explained when we referred to the division of lands in the maps of the Beatus codices, and which the biblical texts placed as follows: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed". It is here, in the East, in the far east of Asia, where the *Earthly Paradise* is situated in the *mappae mundi* of the Beatus codices. Given that the maps are oriented in the literal sense of the word, the site of *Paradise* is found in the upper portion. The version of *El Burgo de Osma* is the only one that makes reference to the biblical *Eden* as an Asiatic region in proximity to *Paradise*. The *Earthly Paradise* is also isolated and access to it was impossible, and hence it was named *hortus conclusus* [enclosed garden]. The *mappae mundi* of the Beatus codices solve the depiction of the barrier to *Paradise* by means of a surrounding frame-like railing, which in turn is the mechanism by which it acquires a square, rectangular or semicircular shape. We are seeing, then, a stylized depiction of its enclosure. The *Earthly Paradise* in the *mappa mundi* of *El Burgo de Osma* is identified in writing (*PARADISUS*). Within this rectangle are drawn the four rivers by means of thick wavy lines which, having parted from a central source,

moved towards the four corners, thus being arranged in the form of an "X". The central spring is circular and there is a written inscription inside, *fons*. The four rivers are identified by their names with the *flumen Fison* moving towards the far northeast, the *flumen Eufates* toward the southeast, the *flumen Geon* to the southwest and the *flumen Tigris* toward the northeast. The X-form of the rivers may have come from the idea that the gospels are to be disseminated to the "four corners of the world" to which Beatus of Liébana refers to in his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*.



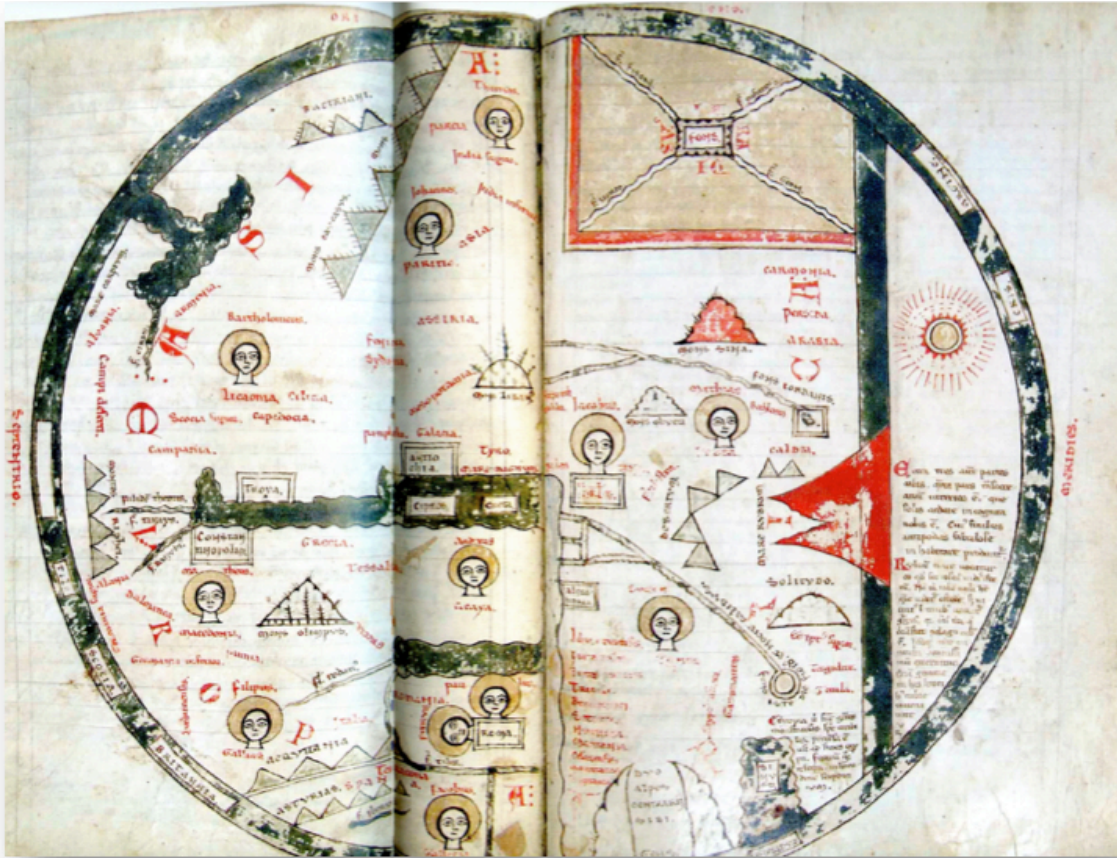
A reproduction of the Turin Beatus map (#207.15)
clearly showing Adam and Eve and the serpent in the East
The Turin map, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS. I.II.1, fols. 38v-39, Turin, Italy



*The Navarra, or Paris II Beatus mappa mundi, 43 x 32 cm, 12th century
Bibliothèque Nationales de France, Paris. MS na Lat 1366, ff. 24v-25r (#207.23)*

Paradise is at the top (left) of the Navarra map, where East should be, though this is not named and without Adam, Eve or the serpent. Instead the main biblical features of the map are the four rivers of Paradise, the Euphrates, Tigris, Phison and Gihon, flowing out of Paradise into the surrounding ocean. The ocean is named *Mare Magnum*, a name normally reserved for the Mediterranean. The *Earthly Paradise* of the *mappa mundi* of Navarra shares many similarities with the *El Burgo de Osma* and *Milan Beatus mappae mundi*, although it also diverges somewhat from them. The perimeter is similarly defined by a rectangle whose interior depicts the paradisiacal spring in a circular shape, within another circle. It is interesting to note that the outer circle, the one which encircles the spring, is colored in red, and this color might allude to the fire of the “flaming sword” which God placed before this garden to guard the way to the tree of life, after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. In fact in this same map the red color is also used to allude to heat in the depiction of the Libyan desert. From the central spring, four rivers emanate. The main difference between this map and the two previous ones lies in the fact that the first shows the four rivers emerging from the *Earthly Paradise*, in other words, it presents them as earthly rivers which disgorge into the encircling ocean, as is also found in other mediaeval maps, for example, the one of Henry of Mainz (a.k.a. the *Sawley mappa mundi*), ca. 1190 (#215). The Euphrates, which curiously has an islet half way along its course, flows towards the east while the three others flow to the south. The act of depicting the waters of Paradise conjoining with those of the ocean that encircles the world seems to be a way of

solving the difficulty of depicting them as non-paradisiacal rivers. In this manner, after rising in the east, their waters thus arrived at the most distant reaches of the world. In the *Navarre* map, besides the paradisiacal *Gihon* we find the Nile flowing opposite Egypt, although there is no hint of a suggestion that both rivers were linked to each other.

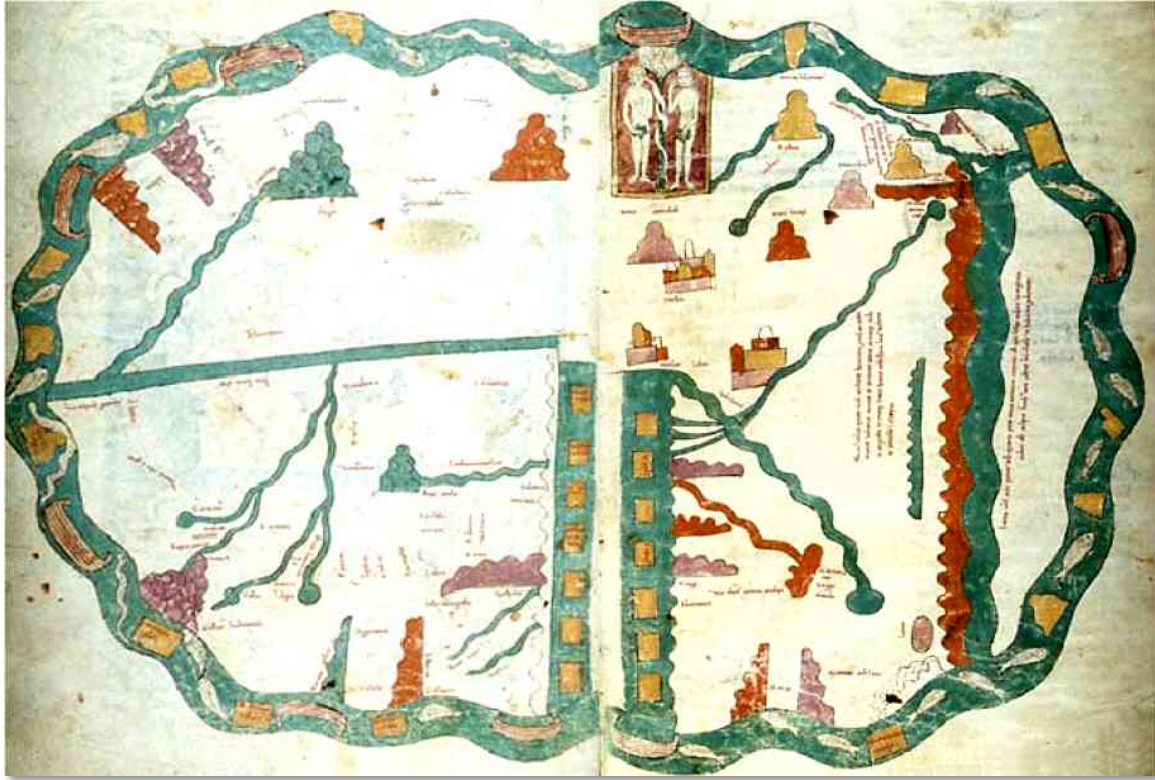


The Milan or Mapa de Oña Beatus derivative, 12th century, MSS F. 105 sup.

Dela Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Ms. F. 105. SUP., folios 71v-72r, Milano, Italy (#207.26)

Here Paradise is represented by a paradisiacal hydrography, by means of the four rivers – the Tigris, Euphrates, Gihon and Phison and the access barrier.

The *Earthly Paradise* is labeled *PARADISVS* and is displayed as a rectangle with a curved eastern side to accommodate the encircling ocean. Within in this “box” are drawn the four rivers emanating from a central source forming an “X”: the *flumen Fison* moving towards the northeast, the *flumen Euphrates* towards the southeast, the *flumen Geon* to the southwest and the *flumen Tigris* toward the northeast. There is no depiction of the “original sin” with Adam and Eve and the serpent.



The Las Huelgas, a.k.a. New York II Beatus.

also known as (a.k.a.) the New York II, the Las Huelgas Beatus mappa mundi derivative, produced as part of Beatus' Commentary on the Apocalypse in 1220, is now preserved in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS. 429, fols. 31v-32 in New York City.

In the *Terrestrial Paradise*, Adam and Eve are portrayed on the *Las Huelgas* Beatus map, along with the *Tree of Life* and the serpent entwined around it. Here Adam (right) and Eve (left) cover their groin areas with leaves indicative of the fact that the "original sin" has already been committed as explained in *Genesis*. Unlike most of the Beatus maps, the background here is red instead of the luxuriant green.

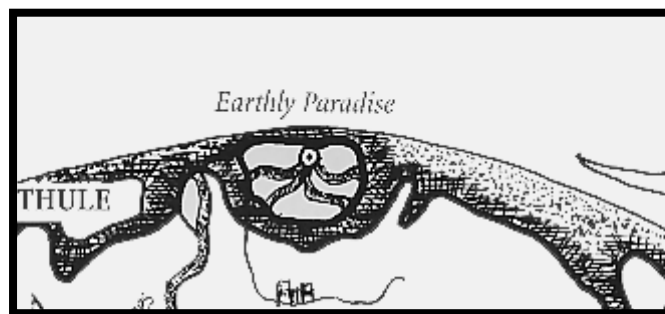
As can be seen on the illustrations above, the members of the *Beatus Family* of maps all contain a representation of Paradise/Garden of Eden either with Adam, Eve and the serpent, or just the four sacred rivers, along with some sort of access barrier.





The Sawley map (a.k.a. the world map of Henry of Mainz), ca.1110 A.D. (#215)
oriented with East at the top

The *Sawley* map places the Mediterranean Sea at its center, *Paradise* at the top, and Africa and the British Isles at its edges. The island of *Paradise* is at the top of the map in the Far East, and the map is flanked by four angels, one of whom points an admonitory finger toward the '*gens imunda*', the walled-up tribes of *Gog and Magog* who will emerge before the Last Judgment Day. These angels stand in place of the traditional 'winds', which often surround medieval world maps, and perhaps are intended for the four angels of *Revelation 7.1*, who hold back the winds after the opening of the sixth seal. All of these angels have golden halos, and are variously colored in green and red; while the figure on the upper left hand carries something that has been variously interpreted as a cube or die, a box, or a church. His clothes are green, except for an upper loose cloak, which is red like the wings. Exactly the opposite arrangement of color is adopted with the angel that fronts him on the right. Much of the map's nomenclature is classical, largely derived from Orosius, especially in Asia and Africa, but in Europe modern names and in Palestine biblical information supplement the basic picture.



Detail of the Earthly Paradise island at the mouth of the Ganges on the Sawley mappamundi



Zonal world map from *Liber Floridus*
 (Herzog-August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Gud. Lat I, folios 69v-70r)
 Lambert St Omer, 12th century 41.3 cm diameter (#217)

At the eastern edge is located the Earthly Paradise [*Paradysus terrestris*] illustrated in the form of a sun inside which we find the reference to Enoch and Elijah (*paradysus terrestris* Enoc Hefyas), given that, according to the biblical texts, God took these individuals there without their having passed through death. From this place, the four rivers of Paradise flow which change into earthly ones to irrigate Asia.

The *Antipodes*, the western pole of the globe according to the Lambert St Omer map, has the *Earthly Paradise* as its counterpart at the eastern pole (likewise off-centre). The island of *Paradise* surrounded by flames is, thanks to the Fall, inaccessible to “us”, that is, to humanity. Yet *Paradise* remains connected to the inhabited world through the four rivers flowing from their source in Eden. Just as the *oikoumene* [known, inhabited world] seems visually to pour out of *Eden*, so too are its populations generated from Adam and Eve. In contrast, the *Antipodes* are completely cut off.

The present maps by Lambert, however, only indicate the ‘third’ and ‘fourth’ continents (those of the Western Hemisphere) by placing little circles in the margins of the *Roman World*, or *Habitable Earth*, respectively entitled *Paradise*, to the northeast, and *Our Antipodes* to the southwest. The idea of an undersea course of rivers from a trans-oceanic *Paradise* to the *oikoumene* was a common belief during the Middle Ages (see Cosmas Indicopleustes, #202). “*Our Antipodes*” is clearly to be understood as the continental masses exactly opposite to Europe and Africa on the other side of the globe, inhabited by living (but apparently not human) beings, and having a day and night in an ‘opposite relation’ to those living in Europe; while the *Paradise* island is probably to be interpreted, in the same way, as precisely antipodean to the

Australian continent. The graphic expression of these ideas in Lambert's maps derives from several sources. First there is the suggestion of a T-O form in the general contour of 'Our World'. Speculations of a much higher antiquity can be traced in the apparent indication of the Ecliptic in both the *Ghent* and *Wolfenbüttel* world maps (in the form of a crooked line running over the Equator and marked by three star-pictures), the obliquity of the sun's path is clearly suggested. Thirdly, of course, is the probable source of earlier world maps by Macrobius and/or Martianus Capella (#201).

Lambert has drawn a detailed world map in a zonal format. East is at the top with *Paradise* a small sunburst to the left of top center, with rivers (Tigris, Euphrates, Nile Ganges) flowing from it into Asia. The island just to the lower left of center is the *Antipodes*. The two land masses shown are divided by the ocean crossed by the solar ecliptic. On the right a text describes the '*temperate southern continent, unknown to the sons of Adam*'. The four rivers are shown streaming from *Paradise*. They are not named on the map, but they are discussed elsewhere in the manuscript.



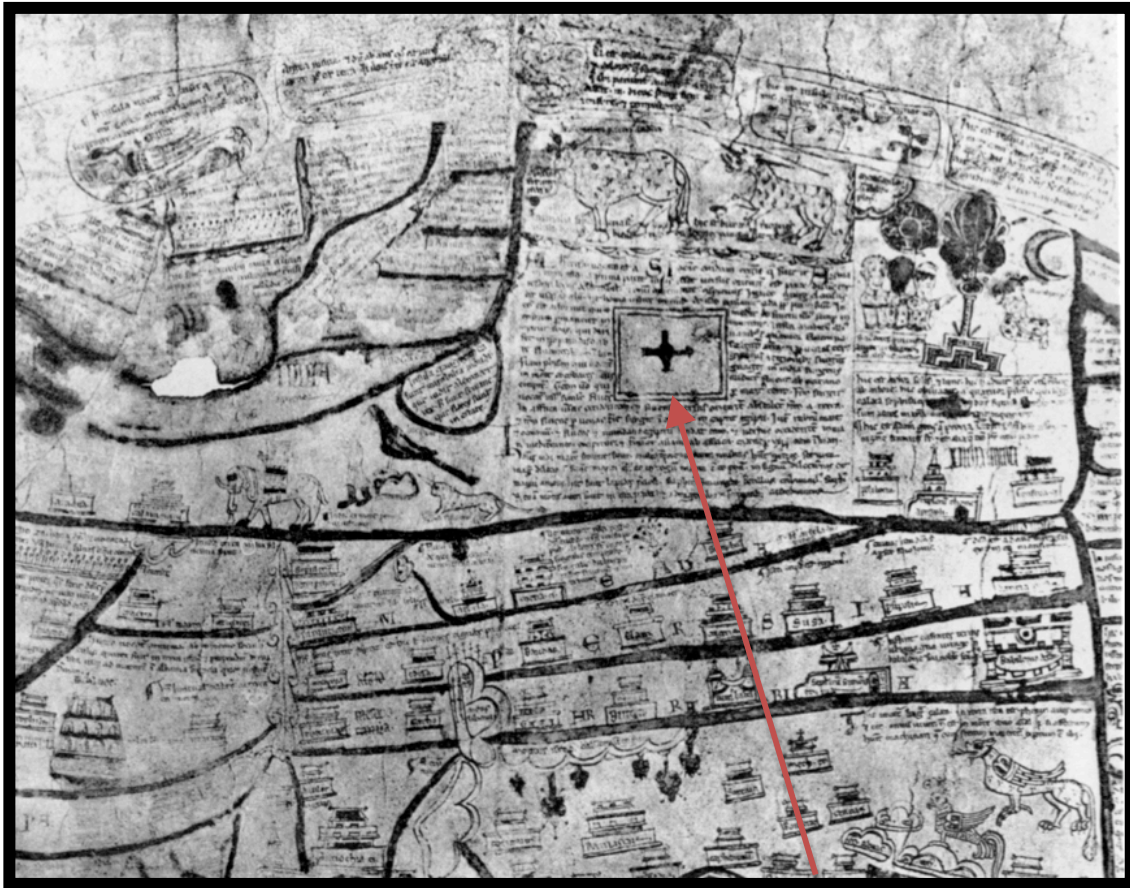
Detail of Lambert's mappamundi showing *Paradysus terrestris* as an island connected by the four sacred rivers



Vercelli mappamundi, c. 1200, 84 x 72 cm (#220.3)

The placing of Jerusalem and of the earthly *Paradise* on the *Vercelli* map differs from the other maps of large size. Both are placed in a striking manner. Instead of the *Garden of Eden* with *Adam and Eve* before a picturesque apple-tree, the *Rotulus* has in the eastern part a simple rectangle with frame and a cross inside, and it is filled with a didactic text explaining *Asia* and *Paradisus Terrestris*. This area is not placed at the top outside the world outline but inside *Asia* between countries each named *India*. The legend referring to the *Garden of Eden* describes several Indian phenomena such as polygamy, suttee, precious stones, (sapphires, emeralds,

beryls, carbuncles) and mountains of gold (*Montes Aurei*) that were guarded by dragons and serpents. Nothing of this character is known from other maps, only the rosette of the *Paradise* on the large Vatican map of Isidore of 775 has a comparable position. But it is a mistake to think it shocking if *Paradise* is omitted on maps of the 13th century; Matthew Paris (#225) omitted it, just as did John of Wallingford. On the other hand, *Paradise* is often to be found even on *portolan*-styled maps of the 15th century and other secular maps such as the *Catalan Atlas* (#235), the maps of Andrea Bianco (#241), Andreas Walsperger (#245) and Giovanni Leardo (#242), as well as on a map in German language of Hanns Rüst (#253.2) in about 1500.



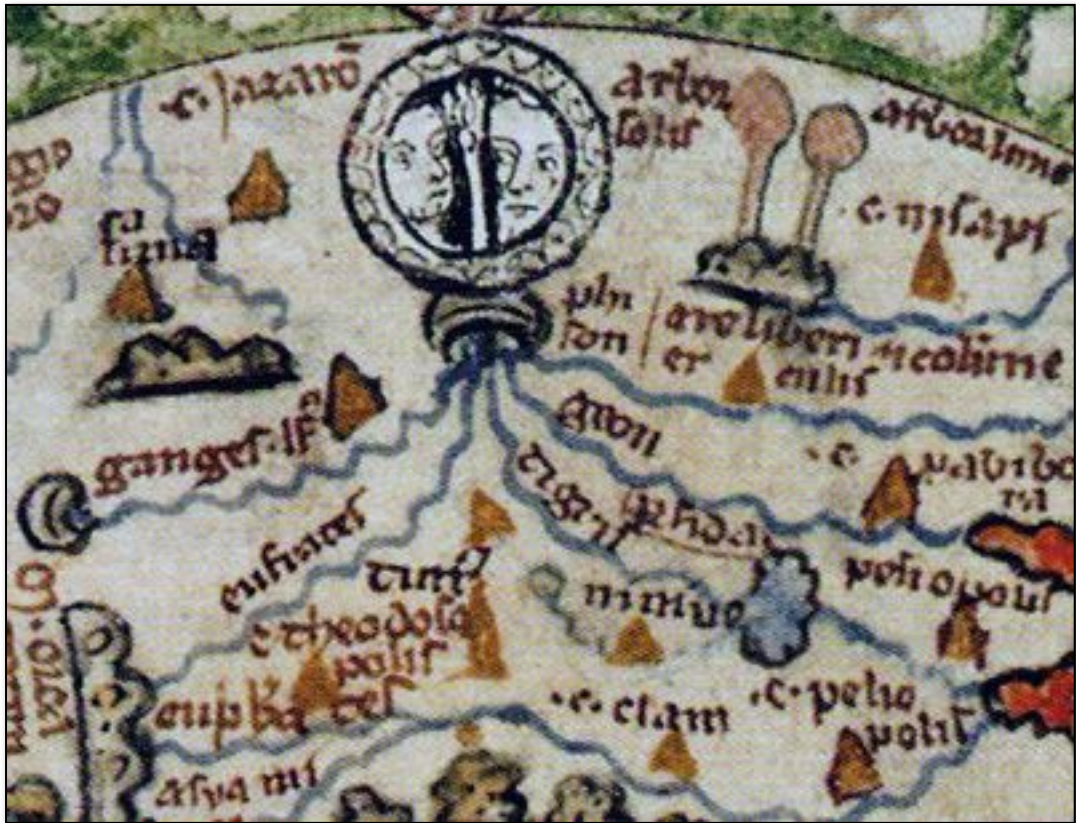
Detail of the eastern part of the world on the Vercelli map. The Earthly Paradise between INDIA and INDIA MEDIA with the tomb of Thomas below: ARMENIA, Ark of Noah, MEDIA, PERSIA, ARRABIA with the tomb of Simon and Judas and the Tower of Babel.



*Psalter mappamundi, 1225-1265 A.D., 8.5 cm (3.7 inches) diameter
(oriented with East at the top)*

Manuscript on vellum: BL Add. MS 28681 (#223)

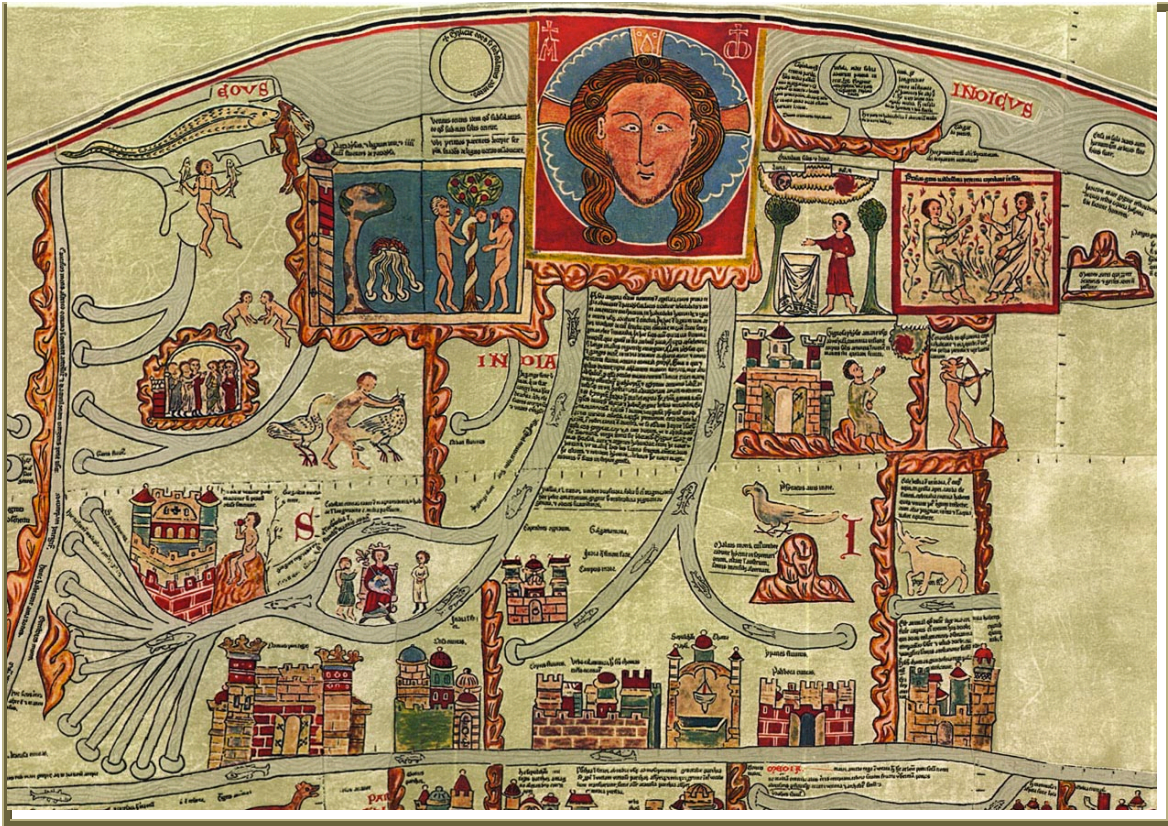
While the *Psalter mappamundi* (above) is centered precisely on Jerusalem, *Paradise*, in the Far East (top), is conceived in a somewhat exceptional manner. The sun pours out of its mouth the flood waters which flows through the *Garden of Eden*, and supplies the five sacred rivers; for the author has entered both the *Ganges* and the *Phison* in this list. Usually tradition identifies four sacred rivers, using either the *Ganges* or *Phison* (see *Cosmas* #202). The heads of Adam and Eve appear within the enclosure, which seems to be marked off with lofty and symmetrical mountains. The *Tree of Temptation* is roughly drawn between the two faces. (Bevan and Phillot, *Medieval Geography*, xlii, suggest the *Arbre Sec*, which they make identical with the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*; and Yule, *Marco Polo*, II.397, refers us to legendary language about the *Dry Tree* which would perhaps support such an identification; - 'in the midst of *Paradise* was a fountain, whence flowed four rivers, and over the fountain a great tree bare of bark and leaves'). The trees of the *Sun* and *Moon* are here separately indicated, close to *Paradise* on the south; while the *Tigris* River flows direct from *Paradise* to the *Indian Ocean*, and the *Euphrates* River (or rather one of two rivers so named) enters a mountain chain west of *Paradise*, named *Orcatoten*, and thence flows to the *Persian Gulf*. Of the *Nile* River only the *Egyptian* portion is given. The *Ganges* River has an utterly false direction, flowing from the northern mountains, not into the sea, but to *Paradise*, like one of the two *Euphrates* rivers, here delineated.





The Ebstorf mappamundi, ca. 1234 (#224)

Prominently displayed at the very heart of the *Ebstorf* map is Jerusalem, the place of man's redemption, showing Christ rising from the tomb; and from that point there stretches in an upward direction - that is to say eastward, towards the rising sun and the Savior's head - the continent of Asia with all its marvels. Here, inaccessible behind a towering range of mountains, lies the *Garden of Eden* with the *Tree of Life*, the four rivers of *Paradise*, and the *Tree of Knowledge*. Below this the Ganges River, fed by eleven tributaries, flows through a tropical landscape. Off the west coast of Africa, however, the cartographer has placed an empty rectangle to mark the position of the *insula perdita* [lost island] where the seafaring St. Brandan discovered what he called *Paradise*.



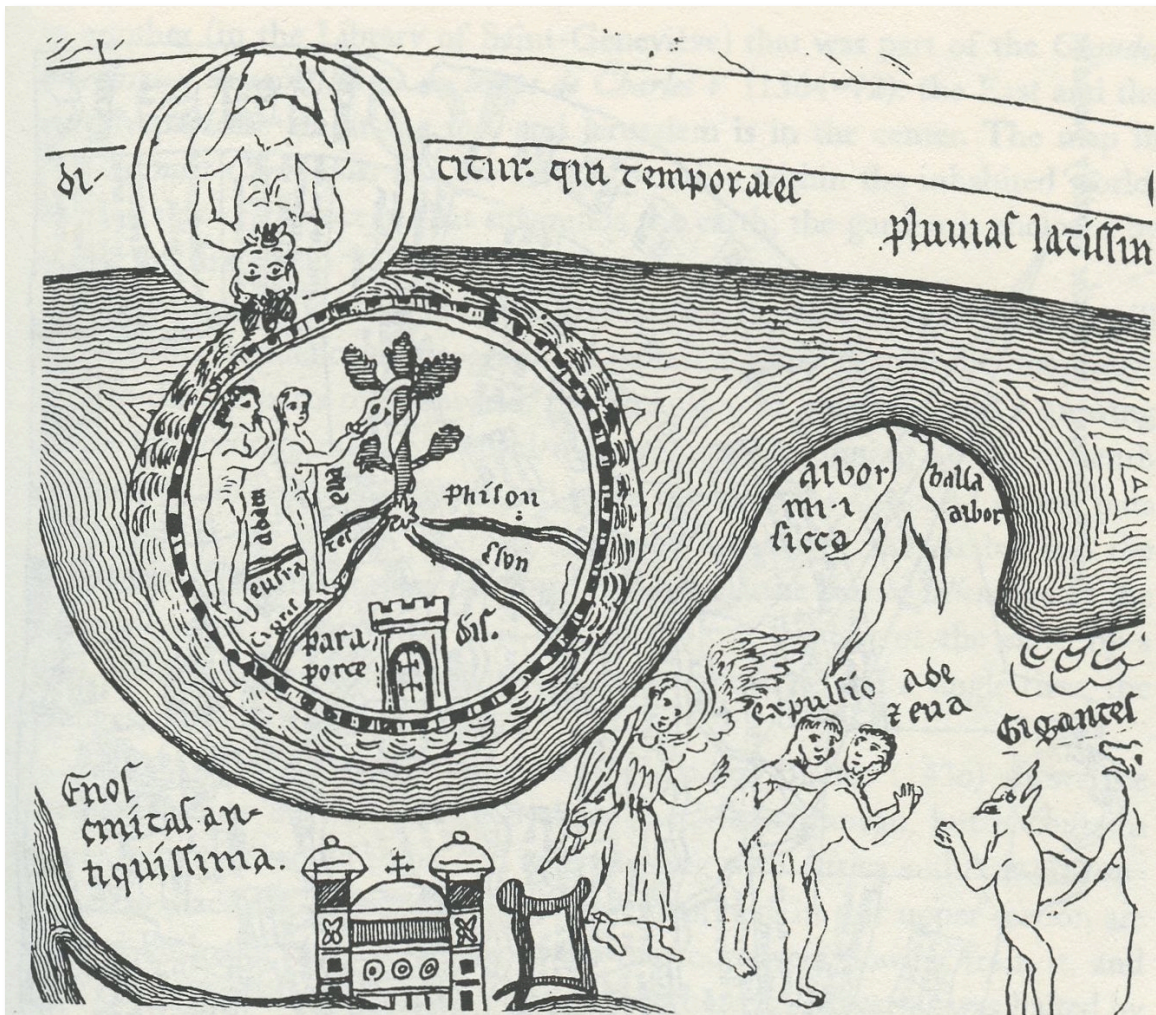
Ebstorf mappamundi (facsimile), detail: the Garden of Eden (the East) showing Adam and Eve, the serpent, the Tree of Life and Knowledge and the four sacred rivers plunging underground to re-surface in the inhabited world, all surrounded by an impenetrable wall of flames.



A modern reproduction of the Hereford mappamundi (#226)

The practice of placing the East at the top was acceptable to the Church, owing to the special sanctity attached to that quarter, and, *Paradise*, shown here as an island, was inserted at this point. On the *Hereford* map of 1290 there is a drawing of Adam, Eve and the serpent, and below to the right, their expulsion from the Garden. Above India is the *Garden of Eden* with four rivers flowing from it which submerge (to prevent men from finding their way back to *Paradise*) to reappear as the legendary sources of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates which are shown flowing

south to the Persian Gulf; and the river Ganges which is shown flowing east forming a delta before reaching the ocean, and the Nile.



Detail of the island Paradise with its four major rivers, Adam, Eve and the serpent on the Hereford mappamundi; below on the right an illustration of their expulsion



World Map by Ranulf Higden, a.k.a The Ramsey Abbey map, 1342, 46 x 34 cm, British Library, Royal MS. 14 C.IX, ff.1v-2. This manuscript has the ownership inscription of John Wardeboys, who was abbot of Ramsey at the time of its dissolution in 1539. #232

Paradise is depicted as an empty rectangular box with the sacred rivers flowing from it. Apparently this empty box was to be illustrated possibly with Adam and Eve at some later date.

The *Polychronicon*, or universal history, written in Latin by Ranulf Higden, an English Benedictine (d. 1364), was translated into English as early as 1385 and partially printed in 1482; it was regarded in England as a masterpiece of the genre (#232). Speaking of the earthly *Paradise*, Higden devotes a long chapter to the subject of *Paradise* and attempts to prove that it exists by using four arguments: (1) "Historical narratives" compare *Paradise* with the region of Sodom before the latter was destroyed. (2) Competent witnesses claim to have seen it. (3) Another important piece of evidence is the four rivers that flow from *Paradise* and whose sources have not been found either in habitable lands or in the sea, despite the efforts of the kings of Egypt and others. (4) Finally, "The tradition about *Paradise* has continued unbroken for over 6,000 years, that is, from the beginning of the world to our own time. But a tradition based on an error ordinarily fades away, either because it is forgotten or because it is ousted by a contrary view."

Higden, who cites the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville and the *Hexaemeron* of St. Basil, does not believe that *Paradise* is situated at the height of the moon, because it would eclipse the moon, nor that it is separated from our habitable world by a wide expanse of sea. We ought not follow here the opinion of people "of limited intelligence and little experience The learned conclude that the earthly paradise is located in the farthest east and makes up a sizable part of the earth's mass, being no smaller than India or Egypt, for the place had been intended for the whole of the human race, if man had not sinned."

Having laid down these basic premises, Higden joins so many others before him in asserting that *Paradise* is a place of perfect health; that it enjoys constant temperate climate; that there is no death there; that Enoch and Elijah are still living there; that its trees do not lose their leaves nor do its flowers fade; that the waters of the flood did not reach it because of its altitude; and that it is surrounded by a wall of fire that reaches to heaven.





Higden mappamundi in the Huntington Library (San Marino, California, HM 132) 14th century copy of the Polychronicon showing Paradise somewhat outside of the habitable world (#232)



Another Ramsey Abbey world map by Ranulf Higden, ca. 1350, British Library, Royal MS 14.C.IX, fol.2v. This manuscript has the ownership inscription of John Wardeboys, who was abbot of Ramsey at the time of its dissolution in 1539. At the top of the map is a sketch of Adam and Eve flanking the Tree of Knowledge at the Fall penciled in next to India whose border is marked by the river Indus. Below them to the right is the Red Sea (colored red), interrupted by a label marking where Moses led the Hebrews to safely from Herod. The small square islands near the middle of the page, set against a green sea, include Crete, Cyprus, Rhodes, and Sicily. (#232)





*World Map from the Chroniques of St. Denis, 1364-1372
oriented with East at the top (#234)*

The *St. Denis* map follows some established traditions such as its circular shape, the circumfluent oceans, the twelve wind directions, the T-O pattern, the orientation with East at the top (*Paradise*), Jerusalem in the center, etc. Here the terrestrial *Paradise* is enclosed by a wall of fire painted in red.



The Catalan Atlas, 1375 (#235)

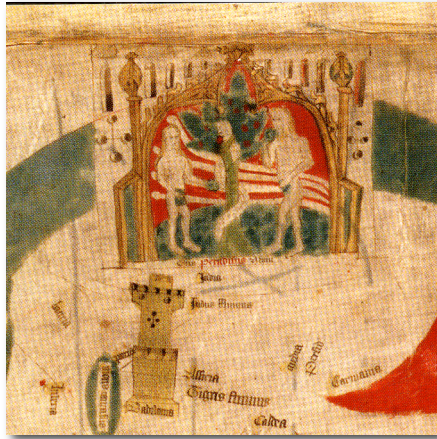
The compiler of the prototype used by Abraham Cresques for the *Catalan Atlas* had recourse to different, sometimes even contradictory sources. The legendary *Insula de Brasil*, for example, which is found on various medieval maps of the North Atlantic and later gave its name to Brazil in South America, is shown here twice, once west of Ireland and a second time farther south. The *Islands of the Blest*, located in accordance with the specifications of Isidore of Seville in his great seventh century encyclopedia, the *Etymologiae*, are called both *iles Beneventurades* and *yles Fortunades*:

The Islands of the Blest are in the Great Sea to the left. . . Isidore says in his 15th book [in fact the 14th] that these islands are so called because they possess a wealth of all goods.... The heathens believe that Paradise is situated there, because the islands have such a temperate climate and such a great fertility of the soil.



The Evesham mappamundi, Ranulf Higden, 1390 (#236.5)

Paradise, personified by a roughly sketched depiction of Adam, Eve, the Tree of Knowledge and the serpent, is depicted in its traditional place at the top of the map, in the East



immediately above India. Yet the scene is significantly different from the depictions of Adam and Eve found at the top of other Higden world maps by being set into the back of an elaborately carved throne. In its general form, the throne on the map broadly resembles the abbatial Great Chair of Evesham Abbey, now in the Almonry Museum at the Abbey's former Almonry in the town of Evesham. The Abbey's throne or Great Chair dates from the 14th century and could thus have been well known to the creator of the map, interpretation of the allegorical role of the ensemble has to be tentative, but it could be that here as in the moral frames of the *Hereford* and the *Duchy of Cornwall* world maps we again see the symbolic representation, on the one hand, of divine authority over

the world and, on the other, of the passage of human time. As well as representing *Paradise*, Adam and Eve could also be personifications of the beginning of human time, while the throne would symbolize both divine authority over the world and the seat of judgment at the Last Judgment—the end of human time. On the *Evesham* map, therefore the throne takes the place of the representation of Christ on the better of the known of the two *Psalter* maps and of the *Last Judgment* on the *Hereford* world map. It was, after all, a commonplace in late medieval art to depict the sovereignty of Christ, the Virgin and the Trinity as enthroned, and most moderately cultured contemporary viewers would have understood the allegory without difficulty.

During the medieval period in Europe there was a fear of venturing into the ocean, beyond the familiar coasts. One of the reasons for this irrational fear of the Ocean Sea was the existence, somewhere beyond the horizon, of *Paradise*. There was no question about the reality of *Paradise*, it was merely a question of locating it precisely. Usually it was placed in the Far East: "The Lord God planted a garden Eastward in Eden ... and he placed at the East of the Garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 2.8). Isidorus of Seville was the principal authority on *Paradise*; he pictured it on the mainland in the Far East, but surrounded it by a fiery wall in case adventurers should become too curious about it. Some located it on an island in the remote East, encircled by mountains that could not be scaled. Others avoided locating it accurately by drawing effigies of Adam and Eve and the *Garden of Eden* in the general vicinity, usually the East. However, as we have seen, for some inexplicable reason some cartographers placed it in Africa.

Somewhere other than the East?

Like many other mythical places like the island of *Brasil*, *St. Brendan Isle*, *Antillia*, *Maidas*, *Frislandia*, *Prester John's kingdom*, etc., the terrestrial *Paradise* meandered on maps over time, from the Far East, to Africa, to the Middle East. While the scriptural location of the "East" is somewhat vague, obviously the idea of *Paradise* in Africa does not seem to have direct support from the *Scriptures*. It is therefore necessary to assume that there might have existed other factors that tended to represent such a location in medieval imagery. To begin with, one must take into account the proximity to the African shores of the *Fortunate Isles* (now the Canary Islands) as well as other similar myths of pagan origin. Celtic culture had already placed some of its most holy sites in this region, but it was mainly through Greek antiquity that the idea became a commonplace in Western thought. In Homer's *Odyssey* (9th century B.C.) we are told of

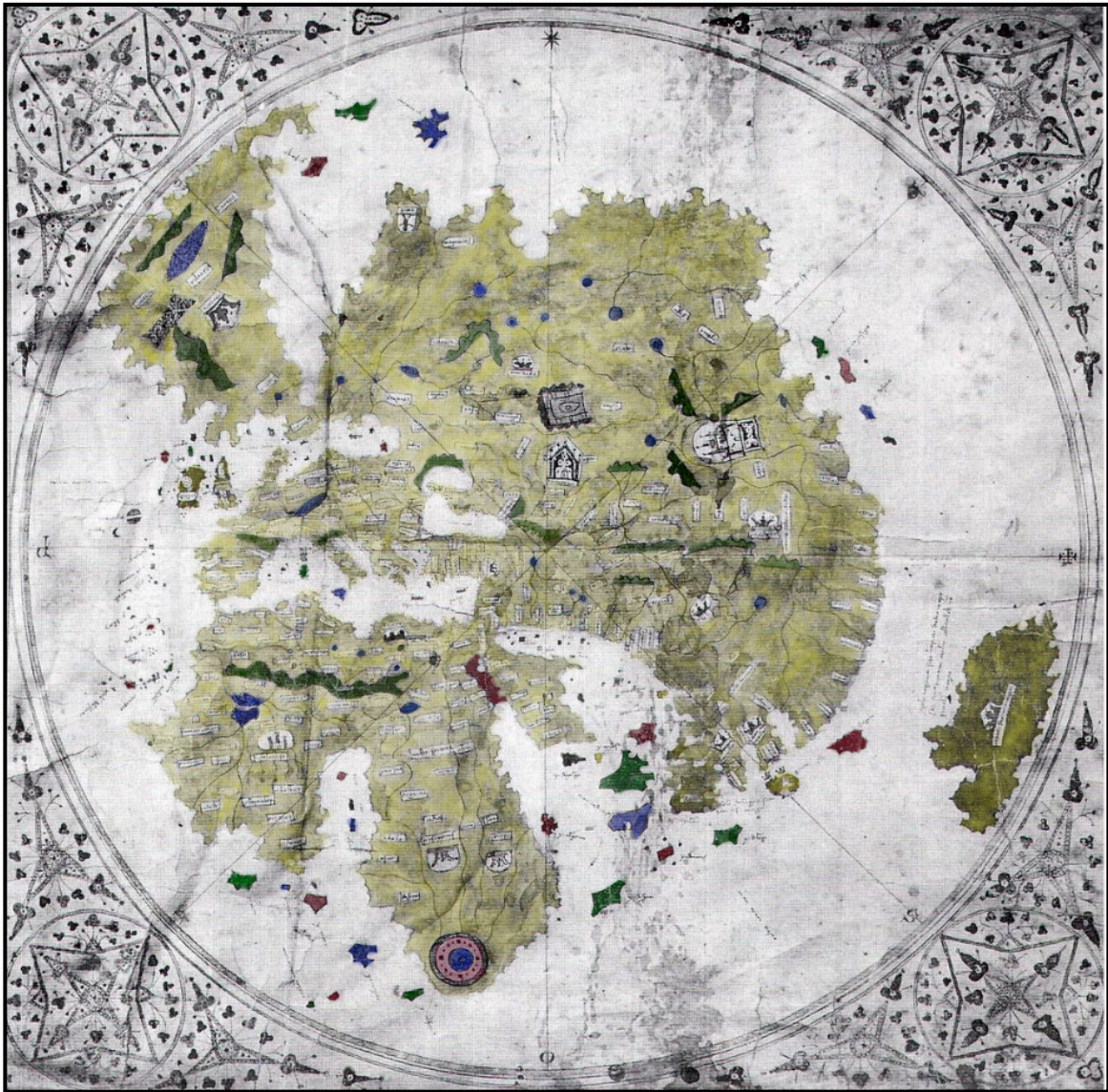
the *Elysian Fields*, situated in the Atlantic Ocean at the southwestern limits of the habitable world. The idyllic climatic conditions can be summarized in the following passage: "No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor even rain, but ever does Ocean send up blasts of the shrill blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men. Similarly, Hesiod (8th century B.C.) places, "along the shore of deep swirling Ocean," the islands of the Blessed, where, "happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year." The tradition so settled, continued thereafter through authors such as Pindar (c.511-443 B.C.) and Horace (65-8 B.C.). But with the advent of Christianity and the overwhelming authority of the *Bible*, the arguments supporting paradisiacal islands in the Atlantic lost much of their force. And yet Saint Brendan's wandering quest for the Land of Promise in these latitudes shows that the Greek-Celtic tradition had not completely vanished during the Middle Ages. At the very end of the period, the possibility of identifying the *Fortunate Isles* with the *Terrestrial Paradise* is echoed by Pierre d'Ailly in his *Imago Mundi* (1410).

Within Christian culture, the idea of *Paradise* at the equator was also present in a number of authors. So much was this so, that Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-74) felt the necessity of considering this possibility in his *Summa Theologica*, though in the end he did not commit himself to either being for or against this view. But others, like his contemporary Bonaventure of Bagnorea, were fully convinced of such a location. It should be noted however, that the latter two tended to be exceptions to the rule. In line with the zonal theory of antiquity, the most commonplace belief during the Middle Ages was that the heat would scorch those seeking to dwell in equatorial latitudes.

The fact that it was not generally agreed that the equator was the most suitable place where the fair nature of the *Garden of Eden* could thrive did not prevent a number of medieval scholars from projecting the location of *Paradise* still further southwards. As is well known, two of the main conditions to be observed for the location of *Paradise* were remoteness and difficulty of access. Few places would therefore seem more appropriate in this regard than the world of the *Antipodes*, separated and unreachable from the *oecumene* by the presumed existence of a fiery scorching belt. On the other hand, there is also the "argument of reversal." Since in the final analysis, if Christianity is no other than the resultant off-spring issuing from the forerunner ancestors Adam and Eve after the Fall, it makes sense, from a symbolical point-of-view, to place the *Garden of Eden* at the *antipodes* of the place where mankind was compelled to live after committing original sin. This explains, at least in part, Dante's location of *Paradise* at the summit of a mountain diametrically opposite Jerusalem. But *Paradise* was not imagined at the *Antipodes* only from a poetic or metaphorical point of view. Gervase of Tilbury (c. 1160-1235) and Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253) echoed this hypothesis from a purely geographical perspective.

An additional element which tended to support the location of *Paradise* in Africa more precisely was the commonplace identification of the Nile with the *Gihon*, one of the four rivers flowing from the *Garden of Eden* (Genesis 2.13). This identification is already suggested in the *Scriptures* (Ecclesiastes 24:27). And so as early as the first century of the Christian era, the equivalence of both denominations is made ultimately clear in Flavius Iosephus's history of the Jews. From then onwards, it was repeated over and over again by almost every author dealing with the great African river. It should be noted, however, that the identification of the *Gihon* with the Nile could still be harmonized with the location of *Paradise* in Asia, for all hypothetical obstacles arising from such a conception were easily overcome by recourse to the theory of subterranean watercourses. In other words, it was possible to think that the river originated from *Paradise* in the East, that it then disappeared in the Ocean, and that it sprang up once again from the ground on the shores of the Red Sea, finally entering Upper Egypt after flowing westward. But in the long run, when cosmographers realized the difficulties of attributing a

common source to the four rivers of Eden, the traditional identification of the *Gihon* with the Nile would allow the location of *Paradise* in Africa, particularly when combined with other pieces of evidence such as the shifting geography of Prester John's kingdom.



The de Virga map, 1415 (#240)

In a break with tradition, here on the de Virga map the Garden of Eden is depicted at the southernmost tip of Africa on the de Virga map, with the symbol of two concentric rings, from which emerge the four rivers mentioned in Genesis. The delineation of Africa is also unusual given that most European medieval world maps show southern Africa as extending strongly eastward, or, as with those based upon Ptolemy, showing an enclosed Indian Ocean. The outline of de Virga's Africa is quite intriguing given that the Portuguese Bartolomeu Dias was still over 70 years away from rounding the Cape of Good Hope.

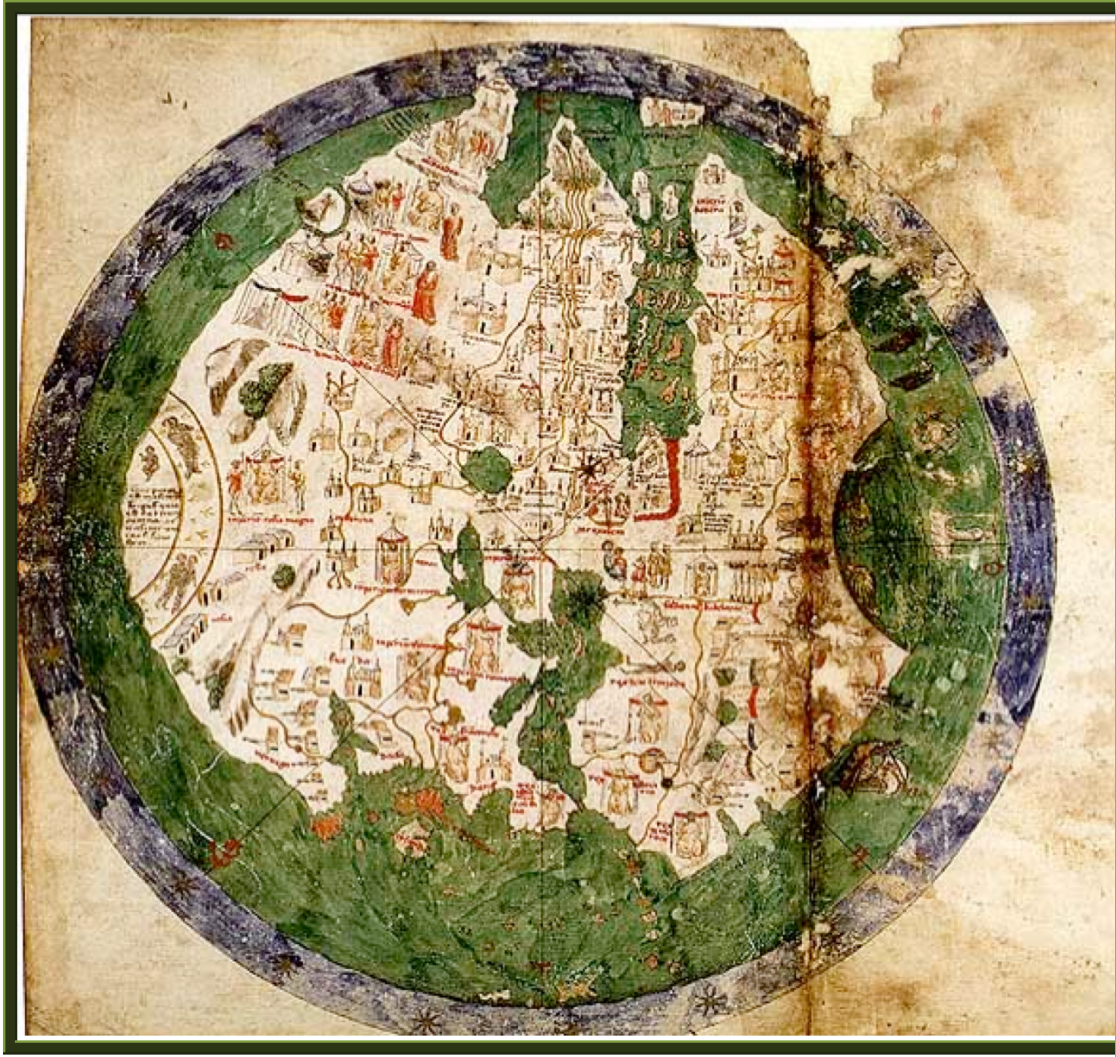
The fabulous realm of Prester John was represented in medieval imagery as a *Paradise* in itself. According to the text of his famous *Epistola*, the land which he rules "streams with honey and is overflowing with milk. In one region grows no poisonous herb, nor does a garrulous frog ever

croak in it, no scorpion exists, nor does the serpent glide through the grass, nor can any poisonous animals exist in it or injure anyone." In another part of his vast dominions, there is a river issuing from *Paradise* which contains emeralds, sapphires, carbuncles, topazes, chrysolites, onyxes, beryls, sardonyxes, and many other precious stones. Gold, silver, spices, strange animals and marvels of every kind, including horned men, *Sagittari*, *Satyrs*, *Pygmies*, *Cynocephali*, *Giants*, *Monoculi* and *Cyclops*, are not uncommon either. The *Epistola* also tells of a certain spring which immediately recalls the myth of the Fountain of Youth: "If anyone has tasted three times of this fountain, from that day on he will feel no fatigue, but will, as long as he lives, be as a man of thirty years of age." And most important of all, this marvelous fountain is associated, as would often be the case in Western literature later on, with the location of the *Garden of Eden*. The text of the *Epistola* says specifically that the spring bubbles up at, "scarcely three days' journey from *Paradise*, out of which Adam was driven." From this it was possible to infer that, wherever Prester John might dwell, *Paradise* could not be far away.

As is well known, Prester John's kingdom was, like *Paradise*, traditionally placed in the East, but from the second decade of the 14th century onwards, the quest for the fabulous Christian ruler was pursued throughout Africa. It was not fortuitous that this shift of geographical localization coincided in time with the envisaging of the idea that *Paradise* might also be located in Africa.

The concurrence of one or more of the above mentioned factors led to the conceiving of *Paradise* in Africa, but, even when placed in this part of the world, scholars did not entirely agree on the exact location, as is evidenced by the cartographic examples shown herein.

But by far the most commonplace location of *Paradise* in Africa was in Ethiopia. To my knowledge the first to hint at this hypothesis was the Dominican friar Jordanus Catalani, who reports in his *Mirabilia descripta* (c.1330) that "between this India [Tertia] and Ethiopia is said to be, towards the east, the Terrestrial Paradise." Two of the main reasons which fostered this notion of an Ethiopian *Paradise* concerned the general misconception regarding the geography of the three Indies and, as already noted, the migration of the Prester John legend to Africa. Both elements are present in Jordanus Catalani and they also occurred in most of the subsequent authors who conceived of an Ethiopian *Garden of Eden*. The most outstanding example is the *Catalan Estense* world map at Modena (c. 1450-60) (#246, *see below*). *Paradise* is there depicted in Ethiopia, not far from Prester John's kingdom, at the latitude of the equator. It appears as a delectable place harboring the image of Adam and Eve, the tree of life in between them, and just below the latter, the fountain which then divides into four rivers that go forth and water the world. There is also the depiction of nine other trees denoting the leafy *Garden of Eden*. And finally, there are six *monts de diamants* acting as a ring of fire which flares up to heaven and are said to be the guardians of the *Terrestrial Paradise*. The overall picture, with the exception of the *Paradise* location, is much in line with Isidore of Seville, who is explicitly quoted in an adjoining legend. However, *Paradise* on maps continued to be shown in Asia and, occasionally in Africa, and later in the Middle East.



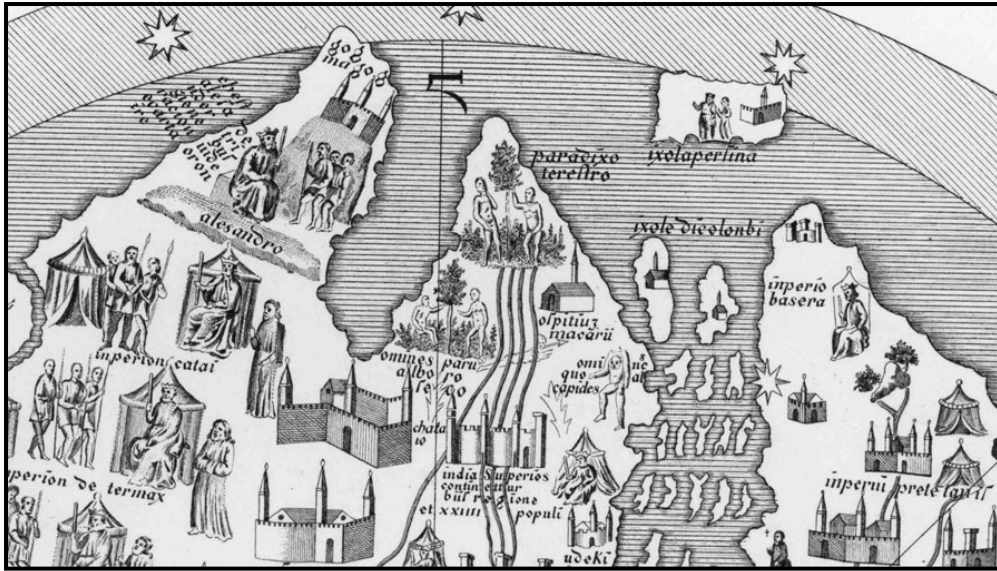
Andrea

Bianco's World Map, 1436, 25 cm diameter,
Nazionale Marciana, Venice, MS It. Z,76, fol. 8 (#241)

oriented with East at the top, this map shows Paradise with Adam and Eve and the four sacred rivers that flow from it. The Indian Ocean is open to the east, and is dotted with islands. Africa extends to form its southern shore and includes kings, dog-headed men and dragons. The two poles are marked with semi-circles and the Atlantic Ocean is greatly enlarged to show the recently discovered islands of the Azores. All the oceans and seas are colored in green, the Red Sea is colored appropriately and the surrounding blue band is dotted with stars representing the heavens.

Biblical sources still predominate on this Bianco *mappamundi*, especially for the land areas toward the edges of the map. The clerical hold on scholarship was responsible for two of the most conspicuous features of the typical world map: (1) the prominence given to biblical topics and topography and, (2) the survival of certain traditions at a time when fresh knowledge was making them untenable or at least demanding their modification. The *Terrestrial Paradise*, for instance, forms an almost constant component of the *mappamundi*, and what could be more natural? No orthodox Christian in the Middle Ages doubted the existence of this original home of mankind as a fact of contemporary history. Many writers devote long chapters to the description of its delights, though none from first-hand enjoyment of them. Even Mandeville,

the most romantic geographer of the age, confesses that he had not visited it on account of his unworthiness, but that he had derived his information about it from trustworthy men. John of Hesse (Hese), who professes to have seen it from a distance in the Far East, (fl. ca. 1389) also assigns a terrestrial position to *Purgatory*, possibly on the authority of Dante who tell us that the *Earthly Paradise* was situated in the Southern Hemisphere on the summit of the mount of *Purgatory*, antipodal to Jerusalem. John Marignolli was assured by the natives of Ceylon/Sri Lanka that *Adam's Peak* was only 40 miles distant from *Paradise* and that on a good day it was possible to hear the water falling from the river which '*went out of Eden to water the Garden*'. The authority upon whom the mapmakers relied mostly was Isidore, whose statement that *Paradise* was '*hedged about on all sides by a long wall of flame . . . in such a way that the fire reached almost to the sky*', is vividly portrayed in the *Hereford map*. The vitality of the tradition was so great that this *Garden of Delights*, with its four westward flowing rivers, was still being located in the Far East long after the travels of Odoric and the Polos had demonstrated the impossibility of any such hydrographical anomaly, and the moral difficulties in the way of the identification of *Cathay* [China] with *Paradise*. The embarrassment arising from the knowledge that the sources of the rivers were mutually remote was banished by assuming that each of the streams, upon leaving *Paradise*, went underground and reappeared at their respective sources. Thus *Paradiso Terrestre*, adjoining *C. Comorin*, is prominently displayed on Bianco's 1436 world map, with four rivers shown flowing through the center of India, one to the north of the Caspian, near Agrican, that is *Astrakan* [the Volga], a second into the south of the Caspian, near *Jilan* [Araxes?], a third into the *Gulf of Scanderoon* [Orontes?], while the fourth river is the Euphrates. The physical existence of the *Terrestrial Paradise* was believed by many people, long after the Middle Ages; its location was still an academic issue when Bishop Huet of Avranches wrote his *Tractatus de Situ Paradisi Terrestrii* in the 18th century.



Detail of Bianco's mappamundi showing Adam & Eve, the Terrestrial Paradise and the four great rivers (right), the location of the notorious Gog and Magog on a peninsula (left), and the Hospice of St. Macarius where St. Macarius was prevented from entering Paradise by the angel's sword.



Andreas Walsperger's World Map, 1448, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, Pal. Lat. 1362b
(oriented with South at the top) 57.5 cm diameter (#245)

To the East, left on the chart, where the earthly Paradise is established as a city with six towers and walls, are the sources, going from left to right, of the rivers of Paradise: Pison, Tigris, Euphrates and Gichon.





World map by Giovanni Leardo, 1452-53, (#242)
 American Geographical Society, Milwaukee University
 (oriented with East at the top)

In its orientation, with East and the *Terrestrial Paradise* at the top and with Jerusalem at the center, the Leardo map follows the Christian tradition of the earlier Middle Ages, hence the long axis of the Mediterranean runs vertically up the southern half of the disk. Other features

reflecting the religious or scriptural influence are Noah's Ark resting on top of Mt. Ararat, Mt. Sinai, the exaggerated length of the River Jordan and an inscription in the far northeast referring to Gog and Magog. The names of the continents, the two inscriptions relating to the polar and equatorial deserts, and the words *Terrestrial Paradise* are in red capitals; but all other names are in minuscule, usually without an initial capital. Besides place-names there are a few longer legends.



Almost under his *Terrestrial Paradise* are three inscriptions: *Here they eat human flesh*; and to the left: *Desert where there are many griffins*; and on the right: *The Thirty Days' Desert* [possibly the Gobi Desert]. Further north, near the line of the frozen region, is a turreted temple with the legend: *This is the sepulcher of the Great Khan and they do this: when he is born to his burial, he comes accompanied by many armed men who kill those whom they meet on the road and they say that the souls of these persons are blessed because they go with the soul of the Great Khan to another life*.

There are indications that a few map-makers had realized long before the Renaissance and the Reformation that they were not dealing with something as tangible as the name of a town, say Jerusalem when it came to showing the *Garden of Eden*. But even if they suspected this could be fiction they may not have been aware that it was of the special kind we call a myth. Add to this the dangers of heresy and it is easy to understand that great caution was required not to deviate from the divine order of things, nor could it be suggested that the Highest Authority might not have been geographically correct. Mapmakers may also have had a hunch that without an orientating myth that linked Christian values with an explanation of man's origin and place in the cosmic order, chaos and anarchy would have threatened the very foundations of civilization.

Beazley puts it well: "The terrestrial Eden had one existence under two conditions, visible and invisible, corporeal and incorporeal, sensual and intellectual. As pertaining to this world, it existed . . . in a land that was on, but not of, the earth that we inhabit. For it lay on higher ground: it breathed a purer air: and, though many of the saints had fixed it in the East, it was really beyond our ken." So perhaps the truth of the matter is that the myth of *Paradise*, like

any symbol, connects two worlds that our minds can perceive and synthesize with the two hemispheres of our brains.



Paradise on the facsimile edition of Leardo's 1448 mappamundi (top) and on the 1442 edition of Leardo's mappamundi (bottom). Detail of the earthly Paradise next to India. Instead of representing the earthly Paradise as a garden, as described in Genesis, Leardo used the same fortified city sign that he employed elsewhere on the map to represent regions, towns and cities. In fact, there was nothing unusual in Leardo's visualization of the earthly paradise as a city, for this is how it was sometimes described in medieval manuscripts. (#242)



The Borgia mappamundi, 1430-1458 (#237) oriented with South at the top
Here Paradise/Garden of Eden is depicted in the Far East, near India Superior and China, surrounded by a wall of mountains.



The concurrence of one or more of the above mentioned factors led to the conceiving of *Paradise* in Africa, but, even when placed in this part of the world, scholars did not entirely agree on the exact location. A few examples will illustrate that the *Garden of Eden* was envisaged in every part of African geography. In the authoritative chronicle of Gomes Eanes de Zurara (c.1415-74) there is mention, together with other voyages along the West African coast in the time of the Infante Dom Henrique, of the large expedition commanded by Lancarote (1445). Concerning a certain point on the Saharan Atlantic coast, not far from Cape Blanco (20° 46' N), Zurara reproduces the account of a council held by the Portuguese captains following a number of slave raids. The question debated was whether the caravels should then turn back to Lisbon with the Moors captured so far, or if they should continue southwards to the "land of the Negroes." Every captain gave his opinion, and this is what Alvaro de Freitas said: "Let us press on to wherever you wish to go, be it even to the Terrestrial Paradise." It is difficult to assess to what extent Zurara reproduces Freitas' exact words, but even if one assumes that he does not, the above-mentioned passage shows that *Paradise* somewhere in Guinea was part of Portuguese imagery. The Guinean location of *Paradise* was partly supported by the fairly common notion of the Gihon-Nile as a twofold river, consisting of an eastern and a western branch which became a single stream in Egypt. The idea of a western branch of the Nile was already present in early authors of Antiquity. Herodotus (5th century B.C.) was probably the first to hint at it. He was followed thereafter by Pliny, Solinus and Pomponius Mela. In the Middle Ages, we see this theory reflected in the works of Orosius and Isidore of Seville, and under their influence it appears in most subsequent authors. It is thus not surprising that when Alvise da Ca'da Mosto reached the mouths of the Senegal in 1455, he saw in the African river a western branch of the *Gihon* which would eventually lead to *Paradise*.

Further down, at the southern extremity of Africa, the idea of *Paradise* was also present. An early example of this location occurs in the *Libro del conocimiento* (c.1350-60), a popular book of travels written by an anonymous Franciscan Friar, a native of Castille. Like many other scholars of his time, the author echoes the theory of the twofold Nile. He names the western branch *rio del oro*, which is none other than the Senegal River. And then with regard to the origins of this river, the anonymous Friar states that it rises, "in the lofty mountains of the Antarctic Pole, where, it is said, is the *Terrestrial Paradise*. One may immediately notice that the expression "it is said" suggests some uncertainty as to the personal commitment of the Spanish Franciscan to this view, but later on, other scholars would take a stand on the same idea with its full consequences. As late as 1543, the Venetian Aluigi di Giovanni still drew the attention of the reader to the fact that Table Mountain (at the Cape of Good Hope) used to be designated as the *Terrestrial Paradise*. Besides, there is the definite evidence of Albertin de Virga's *mappamundi* (1411 or 1415, #240, shown above). The Garden of Eden is there shown at the southernmost tip of Africa in the form of two concentric rings that give rise to the four rivers mentioned in *Genesis*.



The Olomouc [Olmütz] mappamundi , 1450 (#255.1), oriented with West at the top



Detail showing Paradise lying outside the circumfluent ocean and the four sacred rivers

The Olomouc [Olmütz] *mappamundi*, 1450 (#255.1) is oriented with West at the top. The Holy Land, at the center of the map, is heavily emphasized. The four rivers flow out over the world from a peripheral Paradise situated in the farthest east (bottom center). The inscription notes that it is guarded by venomous serpents and an angel with a flaming sword. The *Olmütz* map is another rather late medieval conservative world map made in southern Germany around 1450. While it was bound in a volume of religious writings, it does not appear connected to any of these, so we really do not know the purpose for which it was made. This small map (15 cm [six inches] in diameter), as mentioned, is oriented to the West, but other than that, its features are the traditional ones. Paradise is in the East with the four rivers flowing from it. The inscription notes that it is guarded by venomous serpents and an angel with a flaming sword.

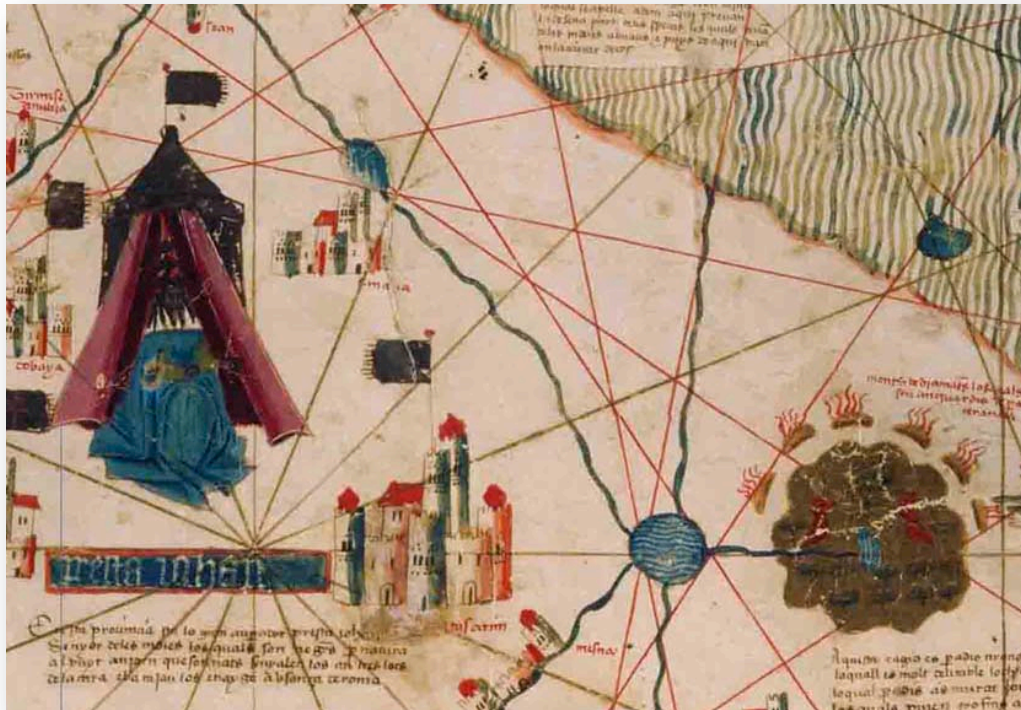


Catalan-Estense world map, 1460 (#246)

But by far the most commonplace location of *Paradise* in Africa was in Ethiopia. To my knowledge the first to hint at this hypothesis was the Dominican friar Jordanus Catalani, who reports in his *Mirabilia descripta* (c.1330) that “between this India [Tertia] and Ethiopia is said to be, towards the east, the Terrestrial Paradise.” Two of the main reasons which fostered this notion of an *Ethiopian Paradise* concerned the general misconception regarding the geography of the three Indies and, as already noted, the migration of the Prester John legend to Africa. Both elements are present in Jordanus Catalani and they also occurred in most of the subsequent authors who conceived of an *Ethiopian Garden of Eden*. The most outstanding example is the Catalan world map at Modena where on the *Catalan-Estense mappamundi* the *Terrestrial Paradise* is not in Mesopotamia or the Far East but in *Abyssinia*, between the eastern branch of the Nile and the Red Sea, at a spring from which the four medieval rivers of *Paradise* flow. *Paradise* is there depicted in Ethiopia, not far from Prester John’s kingdom, at the latitude of the equator. It

appears as a delectable place harboring the image of Adam and Eve, the tree of life in between them, and just below the latter, the fountain which then divides into four rivers that go forth and water the world; There is also the depiction of nine other trees denoting the leafy *Garden of Eden*. And finally, there are six “monts de diamants” acting as a ring of fire which flares up to heaven and are said to be the guardians of the *Terrestrial Paradise*. The overall picture, with the exception of the *Paradise* location, is much in line with Isidore of Seville, who is explicitly quoted in an adjoining legend.

Paradise ceases to appear in Asia following Marco Polo's travels. A legend of the Genoese world map of 1457 (#248) in the Central National Library of Florence tells us that some have put *Paradise* in this part of Africa, while others have said it is beyond India. The *Catalan-Estense* map also gives a short caption on Diamond Mountains, said to be guardians of the *Earthly Paradise*.



Catalan-Estense: The Early Paradise and Prester John

Located near the territory of Prester John between Nubia and the city of Arin [Civitasarin], the latter prominently marked and centrally placed in the Horn of Africa, not far from the Indian Ocean in which six islands of various sixes and colors are depicted. *Paradise* is guarded by five high “Diamond Mountains” surmounted by flames. Within *Paradise* Adam and Eve are shown standing on either side of the Tree of Life. The single river originates in the middle of the Garden before flowing out of it into a lake, there after to separate into four streams. One legend, near Cape Verde, explains the equal duration of night and day at the equator and, another, close to *Paradise*, emphasizes that the delights of the Garden of Eden are incomparable with the features of any other earthly region.

The image of *Paradise* in Ethiopia was so firmly rooted in late medieval culture that even when the vast *India Tertia* shrank into Abyssinia and the momentum of the legend of Prester John began to recede in Renaissance imagery, the land of Ethiopia still retained in certain cases a paradisiacal flavor. The Portuguese chronicler Joao de Barros (1496-1570), while perfectly aware

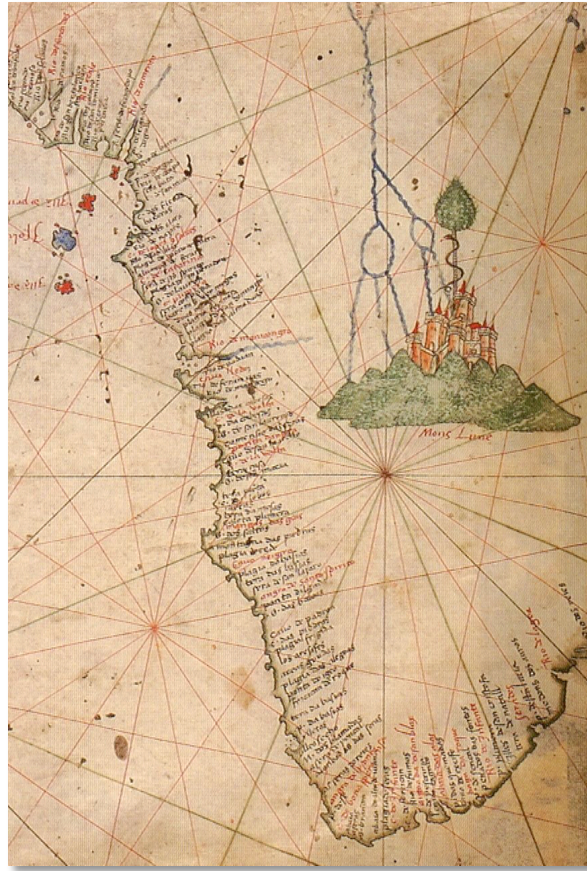
of the crude reality which his fellow countrymen had found in Abyssinia in relation to the Ethiopia of Prester John, still portrayed the country in terms of a "paradise of natural delights."

In short *Paradise* could be found in almost every region of African geography. But despite this unstable location, there is a common feature in all medieval representations of *Paradise* in Africa: its precise site is invariably the summit of a very high mountain. Certainly this is not an exclusive characteristic of the African *Paradise*. There are many reasons for choosing high mountains as the site of *Paradise* irrespective of its African location. First of all, it should be noted that high mountains have always played an important role in the location of holy sites - not necessarily as *Paradise* - in very different cultures. Within the Christian tradition, the idea of placing the *Garden of Eden* at the summit of a mountain is already present in the *Scriptures*. Besides, *Paradise* on high mountains provided medieval scholars with an easy convincing explanation of why the waters of the Flood had failed to reach it. An additional argument was that high mountains fulfilled the condition of being an unattainable place for men, as *Paradise* was thought to be. Finally, the summit of a lofty mountain was a suitable location for those who conceived *Paradise* as a place between the earth and the heavens.

These reasons could obviously be harmonized with the traditional setting of *Paradise* in Asia. John Mandeville, for example, places *Paradise* in the East and says that, "it is the highest land in the world. At the same time, however, there were other authors who believed in *Paradise* in the East without this being associated with a high mountain. But when *Paradise* was located in Africa, there was not much room for ambiguity. Only the altitude of a mountain, and hence the decreasing temperature, could counteract the torrid heat traditionally attributed to Africa, in order to create the mild climate prevailing in the *Garden of Eden*.



Vesconte Maggiolo map of Europe, Africa and part of Asia in his *Atlante nautico*, 1512
Oriented with South at the top, *Paradise* is again located in Africa, on the Mountains of the Moon from which the river Nile, believed to be the biblical Gihon river, It is represented as a fortified castle and is recognized not through label, but by the image of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil above it. Shown below, re-oriented with North at the top.



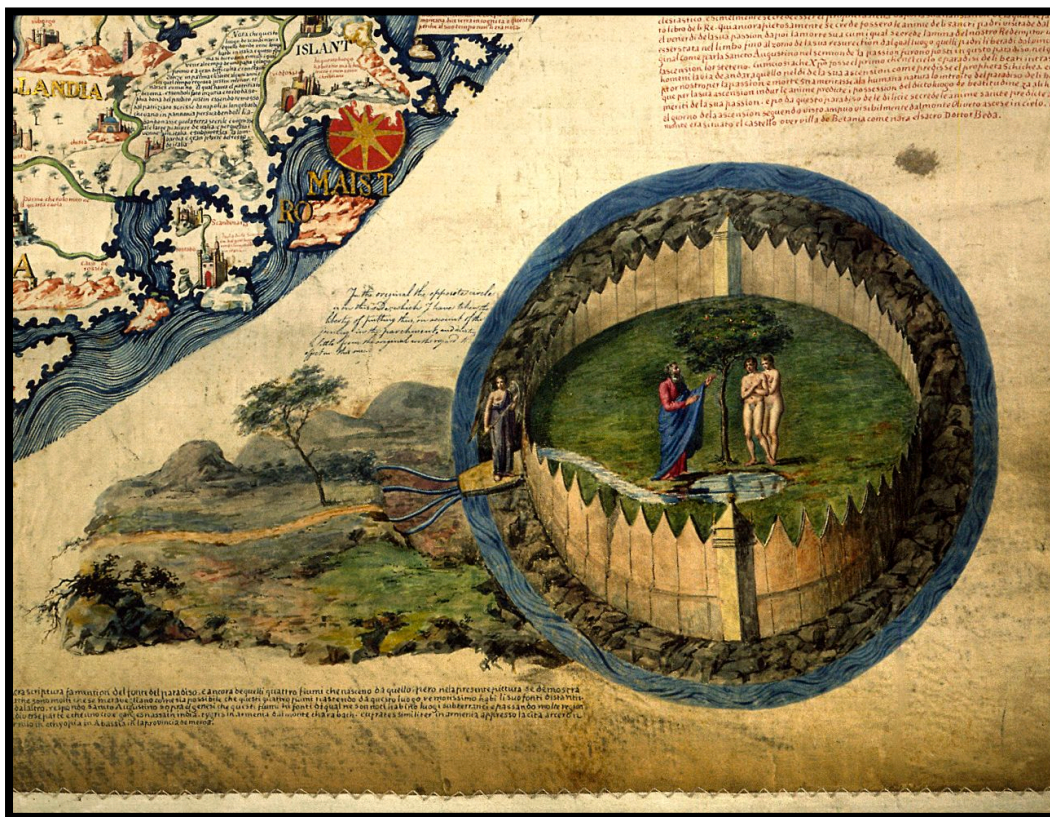


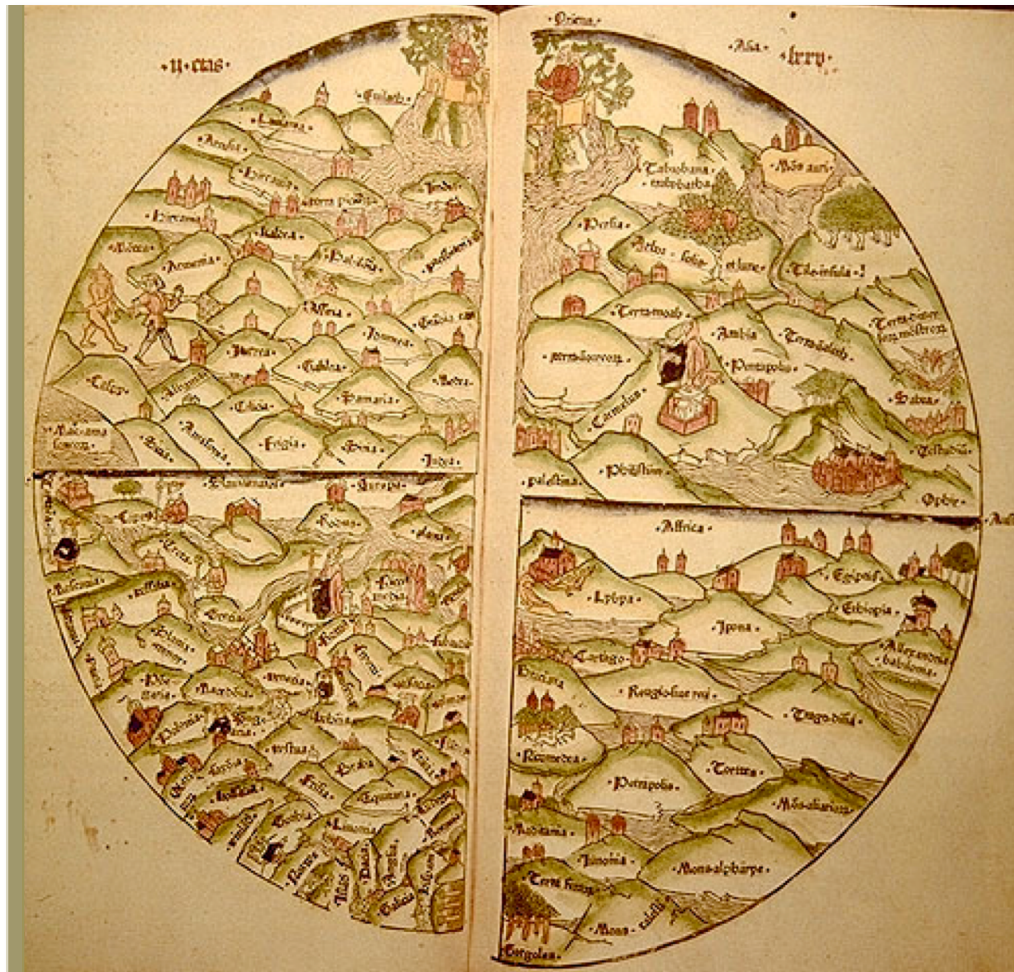
*Copy of the Fra Mauro mappamundi by William Frazer: London and Venice, 1804
Manuscript on vellum: BL Add. MS 11267 (#249)*

The *Terrestrial Paradise*, beautifully depicted by, perhaps, Leonardo Bellini, on the Fra Mauro *mappamundi* is exiled beyond the map to the bottom left where an inscription tries to establish its actual physical location. The legend on the map reads (in translation):

The Paradise of Delights does not only have a spiritual meaning; it is also a real place on the earth, as St. Augustine says in his De Genesi and in his book De Civitate Dei. This place is very far from all human settlements and knowledge; and according to the teachings of the holy doctor Bede, whose authority is also followed by the Master of the Sentences [Peter Lombard], it is to be found in the East. In his book De natura loci, Albertus Magnus also puts it in the East, beyond the circle of the equinox. In this Paradise was placed our first parent, Adam, in a state of innocence. And in the middle of Paradise there was a spring that waters it, and from which arise the four main great rivers. And God had planted it with two trees, one of which was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, bearing the fruit that God had ordered Adam not to eat. However, straying from that commandment, Adam did not obey and he ate the fruit. Hence, as well as the Good which he had already seen before, he also felt Evil, and he fell into the

defects that are implicit in sin. And from this fact that tree has been called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The other tree is the Tree of Life, eating from which man could have nourished himself for a long time. In fact, if this had been his constant nourishment, man would have lived forever, as St. Augustine says in the book *De civitate Dei* and also *De diversis quaestionibus*. It is believed that Enoch was placed in this Paradise and transported to heaven, and one can read of his ascent in the fourth chapter of Genesis and also in Ecclesiastes. Similarly, it is believed this happened to the prophet Elijah after he was carried up to heaven, and this is recorded in the fourth book of Kings. It is also believed that here the souls of the Holy Fathers were visited by the Redeemer on Good Friday after his death; and that, with them, the soul of our Redeemer, united with God, descended into Limbo until the day of his Resurrection; and that the Fathers were freed from the bonds of Original Sin and placed in this Paradise until the day of the Ascension, as St. Augustine says in his sermon *De passione Domini*. This was so that Christ be the first to enter into the heavens and paradise of the blessed. And on the day of his Ascension, he showed men the way to get there, as had been predicted by the prophet Micaiah. Through his death, our Redeemer earned for men entrance into the paradise of the blessed. But for the souls of the Fathers, He also wanted to obtain possession of the place of beatitude, which he had opened to men by means of his Passion. It is believed that the holy souls of the Fathers visibly ascended into the heavens, following Christ on the day of his Ascension from the Mount of Olives (on the slopes of which there was the castle or villa of Betania, as the holy doctor Bede tells us). As the Holy Scriptures speak of the spring in Paradise and the four rivers that arise from it, this drawing depicts that. As there are still many who wonder how it is possible that these four rivers, arising from that most remote place, should yet have sources that are very far from one another, I will answer with the words of St. Augustine's *De Genesi*: these rivers, whose sources are known to us, are linked by underground routes, running through many regions and then coming to the surface in different places. One - that is, the Ganges - arises in India; the Tigris in Armenia, at Mount Charabach; the Euphrates also in Armenia, near the city of Erzurum; and the Ghion - or Nile - in Ethiopia, in the province of Meroe in Abassia.





Rudimentum Novitiorum, world map, 1475, 38 cm diameter (#253)

Oriented with East at the top, Jerusalem at the center, at the top of this picture-world the island of the terrestrial Paradise, with the four rivers flowing from it is represented as an enclosed garden in which Enoch and Elijah are still living.





World map of Hanns Rüst, 1480 (#253.2) oriented with East at the top



A ribbon floats above the map with the words: *This is the mappamundi of all the lands and kingdoms which there are in the whole world.* The maps are round, with east on top, showing Adam and Eve in a walled enclosure. The three continents bear the names of the sons of Noah, and the twelve classical winds surround the map. In the encircling ocean a sequence of islands appear, some of which are populated by assorted monsters. The four rivers (Ganges, Phison, Indus, Nile) are shown streaming from *Paradise* at the top, while boats and islands alternate in the ocean rim and Jerusalem is in the center.. The small circles below contain more abstract visions of the world, the four elements (fire, water, earth, wind) to the left and the division between country, town and the sea to the right.



Wieder-Woldan world map, 1485, 17.5 cm diameter (#255)

The map-picture of the *Wieder-Woldan* world map presents the eastern hemisphere of the world as it was then known in Europe, in our present-day conception (i.e., North at the top). Its basis is the representation of Ptolemy's world map, although the author does not slavishly adhere to it. Rather he has in mind the medieval Christian belief in an earthly *Paradise* with four rivers flowing from it; but he takes special account of advances in knowledge of the three parts of the world made since Ptolemy. The *Lake of Paradise* in the Far East gives birth to four rivers of *Paradise*. Regarding the sources of the Nile, the author tries to connect Ptolemy's point of view with the medieval one based on a certain interpretation of the Bible (the four rivers of *Paradise*: the *Phison* [*Fison* = Ganges] the *Gihon* [Nile], the *Hiddekce* [Tigris] and the Euphrates), and shows one of them, flowing from the *Lake of Paradise*, running through the whole length of Africa and uniting the other sources coming from the mountains only in the middle of the continent. The author wholly suppressed those representations which contradicted his Christian conception of

the world, e.g., Marco Polo's revelations (especially in respect of the eastward course of the rivers in eastern Asia, as this was incompatible with the Biblical rivers flowing from *Paradise* south and westward). The author did not share the view of some of the medieval cartographers, as known to us, that Africa was separated from Asia by a more or less wide and open ocean, because he probably regarded Ptolemy as more trustworthy than Herodotus or Idrisi.



Detailed view of the appended mappamundi on the so-called Columbus map, 1492-1500 (#257)
The mappamundi shows Paradise as an island east of the Asian continent. The place-names and inscriptions are in Latin, *Paradisi terrestri*, surrounded by mountains of diamonds.

Delumeau reports that Christopher Columbus disputes the localizations of the earthly *Paradise* that his predecessors had proposed, but he does not depart in any fundamental way from traditional beliefs about paradise. It is worth transcribing here the famous passage in his report of his third voyage (1498), during which he reached South America in the area of the Gulf of Paria and the mouth of the Orinoco:

Holy Scripture testifies that Our Lord made the earthly Paradise in which he placed the Tree of Life. From it there flowed four main rivers: the Ganges in India, the Tigris and the

Euphrates in Asia ... and the Nile, which rises in Ethiopia and flows into the sea at Alexandria.

I do not find and have never found any Greek or Latin writings which definitely state the worldly situation of the earthly Paradise, nor have I seen any world map which establishes its position except by deduction I believe that, if I pass below the Equator, on reaching these higher regions I shall find a much cooler climate and a greater difference in the stars and waters. Not that I believe it possible to sail to the extreme summit or that it is covered by water, or that it is even possible to go there. For I believe that the earthly Paradise lies here, which no one can enter except by God's leave

I do not hold that the earthly Paradise has the form of a rugged mountain, as it is shown in pictures, but that it lies at the summit of what I have described as the stalk of a pear, and that by gradually approaching it one begins, while still at a great distance, to climb towards it. As I have said, I do not believe that anyone can ascend to the top. I do believe, however, that, distant though it is, these waters may flow from there to this place which I have reached, and form this lake [the Gulf of Paria]'

All this provides great evidence of the earthly Paradise, because the situation agrees with the beliefs of those holy and wise theologians and all the signs concord strongly with this idea. For I have never read or heard of such a quantity of fresh water flowing so close to the salt and flowing into it, and the very temperate climate provides a further confirmation. If this river [the Orinoco] does not flow out of the earthly Paradise, the marvel is still greater. For I do not believe that there is so great and deep a river anywhere in the world.

Commenting on the works of the great discoverer and in particular on the passage just cited, Alexandre Cioranescu observes:

Columbus ... believes in the manner of a typical medieval person, that is, he believes everything, without exercising any discernment or making any distinction between opinions and articles of faith. His belief is not only a religious sentiment but also a method which he applies indiscriminately to all areas of thought: he believes in the earthly paradise just as he believes in the authority of the ancients, the making of gold by bringing to bear the rays of the sun, the mountain of water that forms the navel of the earth, and the stories of Marco Polo.

The important point for us in the present context is that Christopher Columbus believed firmly in the continued existence of the earthly paradise; that he located it at a great height and in a region with a pleasant climate; and that he regarded it as the source of an enormous amount of fresh water.

The eschatological element is a fundamental component of Christopher Columbus' perception of the universe. The sources behind the Admiral's vision of the world, rooted in Medieval and Christian cosmography, saw the earth as the stage for the history of humanity, from creation to doomsday; as much as the approaching apocalypse played a role, so did the origin of mankind. During his third voyage, indeed, Columbus believed that he reached the surroundings of the earthly *Paradise*. According to medieval authorities and *mappae mundi*, the *Garden of Eden* was located on an island at the extreme East of the world, where four large rivers sprung and filled a lake with their waters. Columbus found a similar geographical condition south of the island of Trinidad, where the Gulf of Paria was filled by the waters of the Orinoco delta, divided into four waterways. According to the Admiral, the noise of those waters was so loud that they should have originated in some large landmass to the south. The intuition of a hitherto unknown continent, however, gave ultimately way to an idea that sounded somewhat more comforting: that land was the earthly *Paradise*. Again, Columbus managed to combine his

own perception with the background of medieval cosmographic sources. In fact, that “paradise” was about to be fatally polluted by Europeans’ colonialist greed, and its inhabitants were about to experience an apocalypse rather than a second Eden.

What is more, the opinion of the traditional authorities could provide him with an explanation of a peculiar phenomenon that occurred during the journey: a sudden shift of the compass in the middle of the Atlantic waters – that was actually due to the inconsistency of the physical and magnetic North Pole of the planet. Bolstered by the traditional representation of the *Garden of Eden* as situated on top of a mountain (conveyed, among others, by Pierre d’Ailly), Columbus proceeded to explain how the earth must not have been perfectly spherical, but instead in the shape of a pear, with a bump corresponding to the location of *Paradise*. The practicalities of early modern transatlantic navigation and scriptural knowledge of the late medieval world remained fundamentally intertwined. While traditional historiography on Christopher Columbus presents him as an expert navigator, a pioneer, and a “discoverer,” recent scholarship has shed more light on his compliance to a traditional worldview, based on classical and medieval authorities. The project of a transatlantic navigation, though made possible by advanced technical skills, was supported by the cosmographic vision – and the ambition of dominance – of Christian Medieval Europe.

Beginning with the journeys of the Flemish William of Rubruck who reached Mongolia through Central Asia in 1264 and the travel of the Italians Niccolò and Maffeo Polo to China – they reach Kublai Khan’s seat at Dadu, now known as Beijing, China in 1266; and 1271–1295, the second trip of Niccolò and Maffeo Polo to China – the placement of the terrestrial *Paradise* gradually waned in the Far East due to the reports of these travelers. Then with the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery and Exploration beginning with the Portuguese in the late 15th century, exploring the coasts of Africa and trading throughout Southeast Asia, these discoveries by Christian Europeans began to diminish the representation of *Paradise* and the *Garden of Eden* on their maps of Asia and Africa. However, the search for and belief in the terrestrial *Paradise* and *Garden of Eden* remained and was still represented on a few 16th century regional maps.

There are indications that a few mapmakers had realized long before the Renaissance and the Reformation that they were not dealing with something as tangible as the name of a town, say Jerusalem, when it came to showing the *Garden of Eden*. But even if they suspected this could be fiction they may not have been aware that it was of the special kind we call a myth. Add to this the dangers of heresy and it is easy to understand that great caution was required not to deviate from the divine order of things, nor could it be suggested that the Highest Authority might not have been geographically correct. Mapmakers may also have had a hunch that without an orientating myth that linked Christian values with an explanation of man’s origin and place in the cosmic order, chaos and anarchy would have threatened the very foundations of civilization.



The Kuntsmann II (a.k.a. The Four Finger) World Map, 1502-06
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 110.5 x 99 cm (#309)

This anonymous map, dated to between 1502 and 1506, is one of the earliest European world maps to show the New World as well as one of the last European world maps to feature the earthly *Paradise*. Little attention has been paid to the “map sign” for the earthly *Paradise* (10 x 7 cm) that appears in the middle of southern Africa. The presence of *Paradise* in Africa has not gone entirely unremarked, but it has not been discussed much in the literature. Rather more words are devoted to it in an Italian study published in 2001, significantly entitled *Alla scoperta del mondo*, where the presence of *Paradise* in Africa is defined as a “very solid anchorage to the past” and “very peculiar on a map of that period.” The authors suggest the position of the vignette is modeled on the representation of *Paradise* on the *Catalan Estense* map of 1450–1460 (#246). The representation of Africa on the *Kunstmann II* map traces the coastline in careful detail, and is rich in names of bays, promontories, rivers, cities, and ports. The portrayal of the interior is more of a summary, the general emptiness of the continent being masked by seven portraits of local rulers and a large vignette on the Tropic of Capricorn showing *Paradise*, labeled *Paradisus Terrestris*. The inclusion of the *Garden of Eden* on a world map dating from just after 1500 and including cartographical sketches of the New World is indeed remarkable. Throughout the Middle Ages the *Garden of Eden* described in *Genesis* was believed to exist on earth, as a place belonging both to the past and to the East. At first, the mythical *Prester John*’s kingdom was thought to be somewhere in India, but in the course of the 14th century his empire was gradually moved from India to Ethiopia, a land that had always been perceived as almost celestial. This transfer was yet another factor contributing to the late medieval location of *Paradise* in Africa. It also explains why, on this map, *Paradise* appears near the portrait of *Prester John*. Since tradition dictated that the early *Paradise* was unreachable by man, the author of the

Kunstmann II map placed his sign for *Paradise* on the tropic that Jacobus Pérez of Valencia had said was the impassable frontier of fire protecting *Paradise*; the map maker, however, was also outlining and naming on his map several newly discovered lands lying to the south of that tropic, not only in America but also in Africa itself.



Detail of the Kunstmann II map (re-oriented to East at the top): on the left lions are depicted in present-day Russia; on the right Paradise is displayed symbolically in southern Africa

A legend on the map to the south of the Gulf of Guinea (and thus of the Tropic of Capricorn), for instance, indicates the island where Portuguese criminals were exiled. By the time the *Kunstmann II* map was compiled, in other words, the known world had been extended to the south of the Tropic of Capricorn at a number of points, almost surrounding, as it were, the unknown African territories thought to border on *Paradise*. The map sign for *Paradise*, however, is intended not to pinpoint an exact location, but to indicate in a general fashion a neighborhood and a limit, the point at which the known and knowable world was supposed to end. In so far as the author of the *Kunstmann II* map depicts the coastlines in great detail, enumerates the ports, and defines space by mathematical astronomy, he is adopting the principles of nautical chart making and Ptolemaic mapping. In so far as he includes the inaccessible “somewhere” of the earthly *Paradise* in Africa, he remains in the tradition of the medieval world maps in which the articulation of space is an unfolding of the process of human history and places are indicated next to each other, irrespective of “correct” distances and positions.

What makes the representation of *Paradise* on the *Kunstmann II* map particularly interesting is its design. To read most of the legends and vignettes, the map has to be turned so that east is at the top. The icon and the inscription for *Paradise* (*paradisus terrestris*) are positioned to be read with the map oriented with East at the top. The vignette shows *Paradise* on the top of a high mountain, creating an image that evokes the intermediate situation of a *Paradise* on earth halfway to heaven. *Paradise* is also depicted as a garden protected by a walled enclosure, a standard practice in the iconography of the subject. Within the garden, the larger, central tree could be either the *Tree of Life* or, more likely, the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, mentioned in *Genesis* as situated in the middle of *Eden*, whereas the two small trees flanking it represent the other trees (*Genesis* 9). On top of the central tree sits a parrot.

According to Alessandro Scafi, most intriguing of all, however, is the coat of arms hanging on the larger tree of *Paradise*. A coat of arms is a sign of ownership. The coat of arms is that of the Spanish Cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal (1456–1523), and the implication

must be that either the map was once in the cardinal's possession or, more likely, given contemporary cartographic practice, that it had been made for him.

This location of the *Terrestrial Paradise* is the same as on the *Catalan Estense mappamundi* of 1450 shown above (#246).

The French theologian John Calvin agreed with the idea that the garden had been drowned and lost, but presented the comforting theory that God maintained affection for Man and had left remnants of the paradise on Earth. Calvin accompanied his Commentary on Genesis (1553) with a map of Mesopotamia with its rivers, and claimed the garden to have once been in the region. He interpreted the 'four rivers' to mean four "heads" of rivers, that is, two channels carrying the water to the garden, and two bearing it away, and showed how this could fit the Mesopotamian system. Calvin's idea was adopted and developed by various 16th century publishers of the Bible, some of whom clarified the idea for their readers and also went a step further, drawing the site of the Fall on the map. One example from Thomas Guarinus' *Biblia Sacra*, from 1578, is shown below.

In 1607, Mercator and Hondius developed this design with greater geographic detail for the map *Paradisus*, which is dominated by a vignette of Adam and Eve below the apple tree.

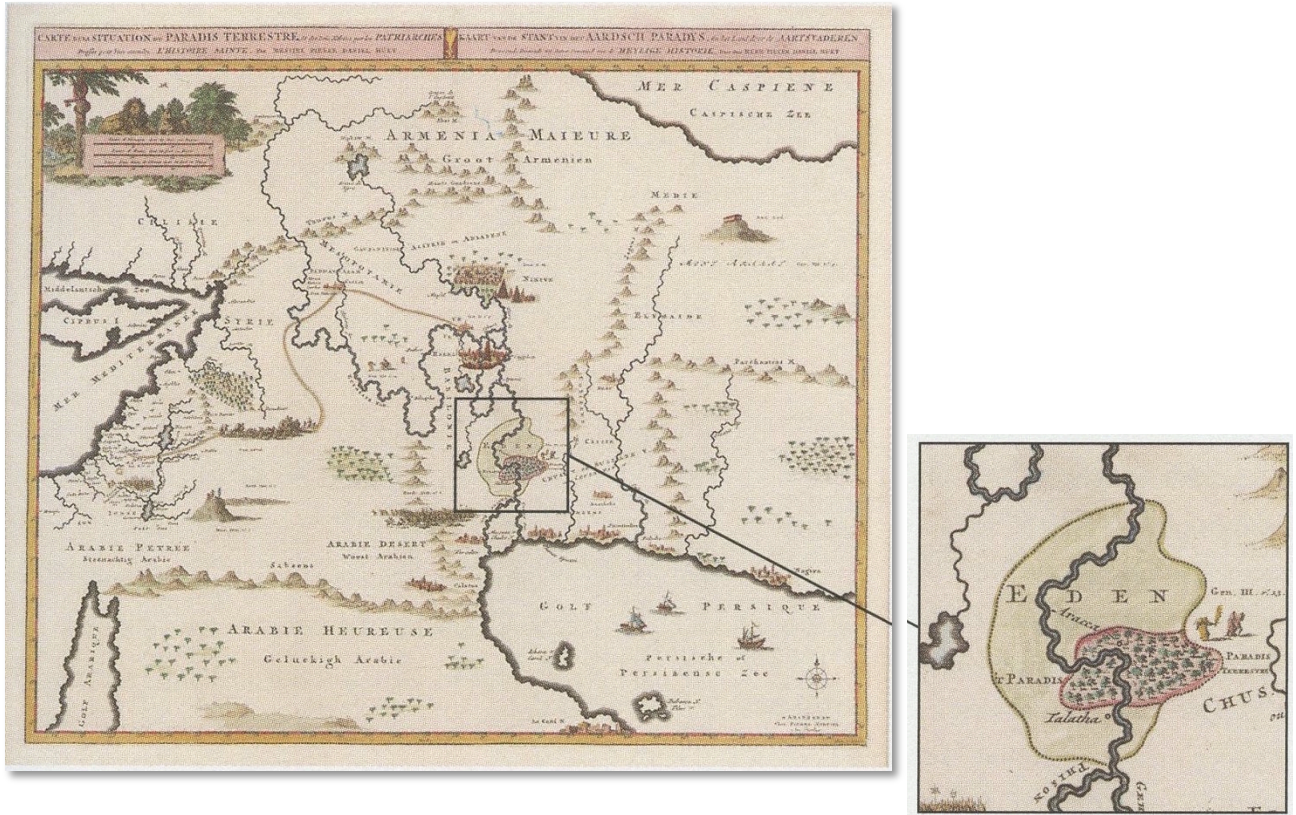
The four-river design of the garden was dropped from maps soon after. One of the last to feature the emblem was Sir Walter Raleigh, who, a few years after Hondius, included the *Earthly Paradise* on his map of *Arabia the Happie*, together with a scattering of other biblical imagery. The idea that the Garden had been obliterated by the Flood continued to be accepted, but from this point there was a shift in theory as to its original location: attention turned from Mesopotamia to Armenia, which, at this time, included the region between the Upper Euphrates and Lake Urmia, the Black Sea and the Syrian desert. Perhaps, it was thought, the biblical river *Pishon* was, in fact, the *River Phasis*, and the *Gihon* the River Araxes. After this, the Holy Land was offered as another alternative, but this was more to do with dogmatic convenience than any geographic indication. By the 18th century, the cartography of the *Earthly Paradise* was, for most, a decoration of antiquity, and it was left to its perennial verdancy in imagination and religious myth.

Historian Charles Raymond Beazley puts it well: "The terrestrial Eden had one existence under two conditions, visible and invisible, corporeal and incorporeal, sensual and intellectual. As pertaining to this world, it existed in a land that was on, but not of, the earth that we inhabit. For it lay on higher ground; it breathed a purer air; and though many of the saints had fixed it in the East, it was really beyond our ken."

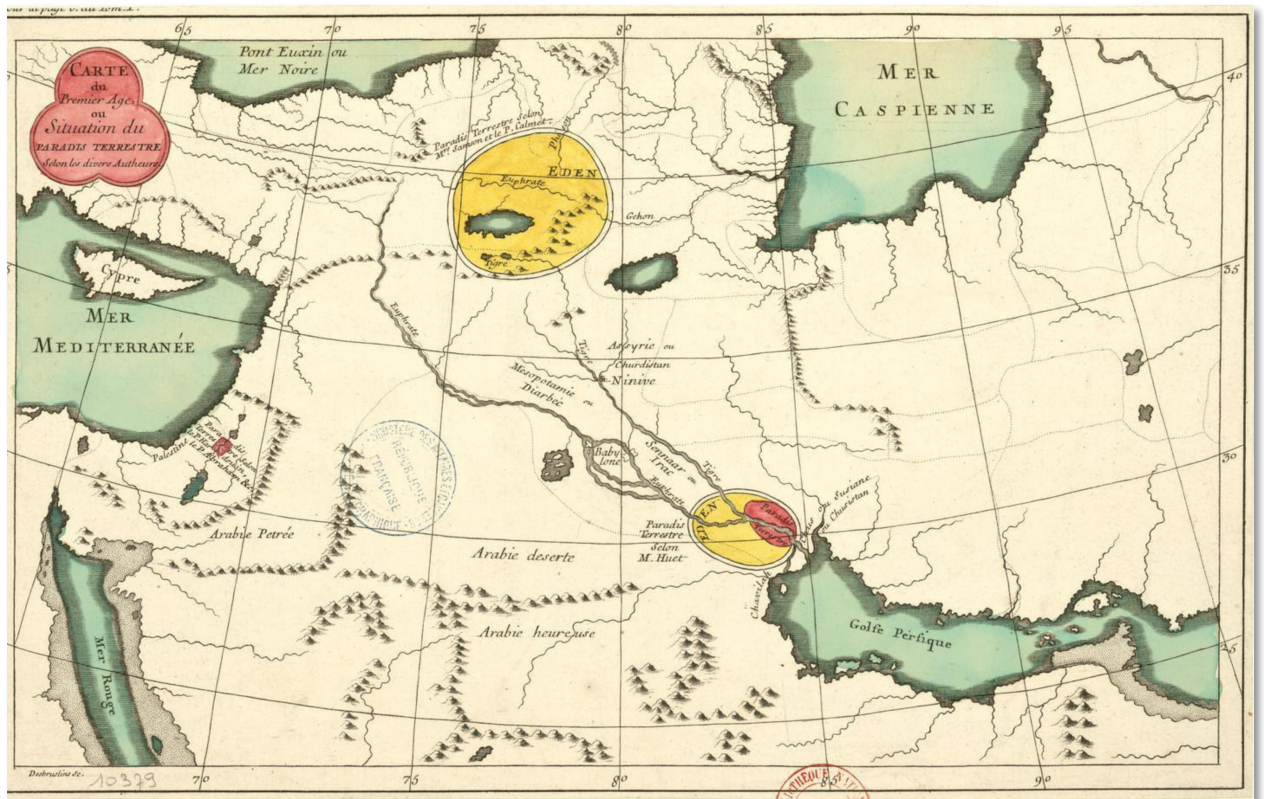




A map by Romain de Hooge, c.1700, with the Garden of Eden depicted in the Middle East.



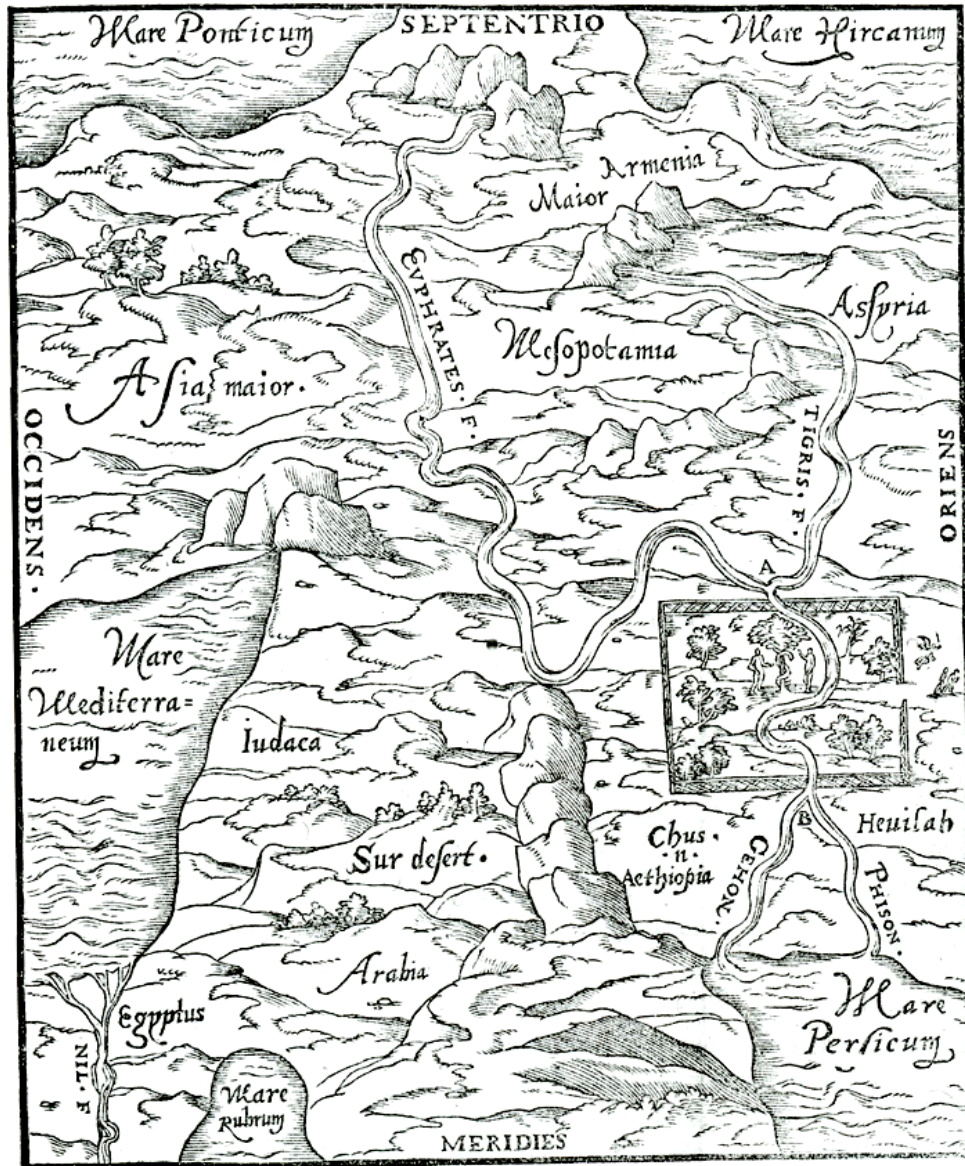
A late map of the Garden of Eden in the Middle East by Pierre Mortier (1700) was based on the theories of Pierre Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches. The caption reads: 'Map of the location of the terrestrial paradise, and of the country inhabited by the patriarchs, laid out for the good understanding of sacred history, by M. Pierre Daniel Huet.'



Carte du Premier Age ou Situation du Paradis Terrestre, 1700s



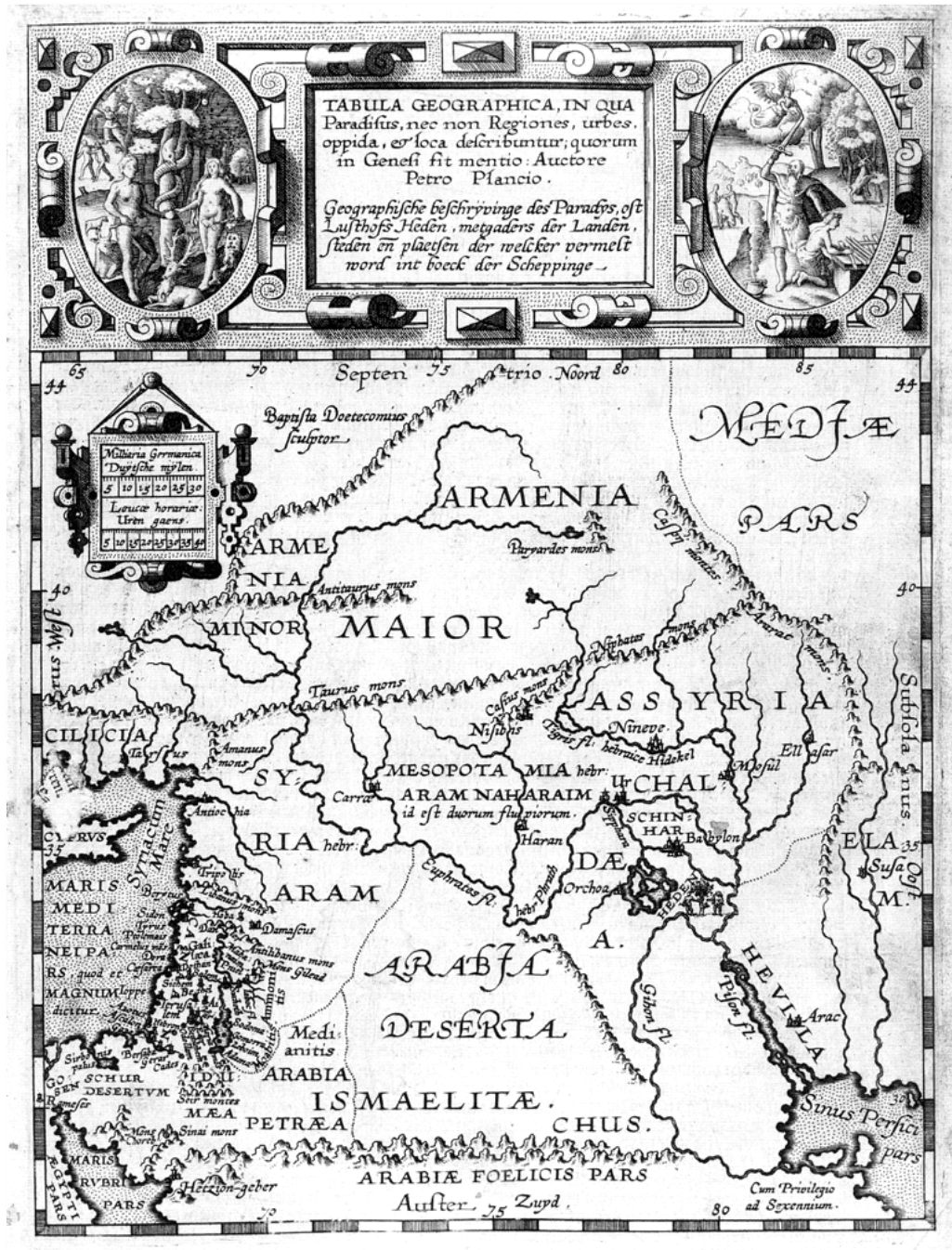
A
variant of John Calvin's map of the location of Eden from *La Sainte Bible* (Lyons: Sebastien Honore, 1566), p. 2r. 10 X 9 cm. London, British Library, C23.e.10. Whereas Calvin had indicated the general vicinity of paradise within Mesopotamia, later authors narrowed the location of Eden still further. For Honorati's edition of the Geneva Bible, a vignette of the Fall, showing Adam and Eve with the serpent entwining the Tree of Knowledge, has been added to the map, below the name *Terre de Hevilah* and to the east of the single river.



Map of the location of Eden inserted into Antoine Regnault's *Discours du voyage d'outre mer au St Sepulcre de Jerusalem et autres lieux de la Terre Sainte* (Lyons: [no pub.] 1573).

16 X 13 cm. London, British Library, G28 24.

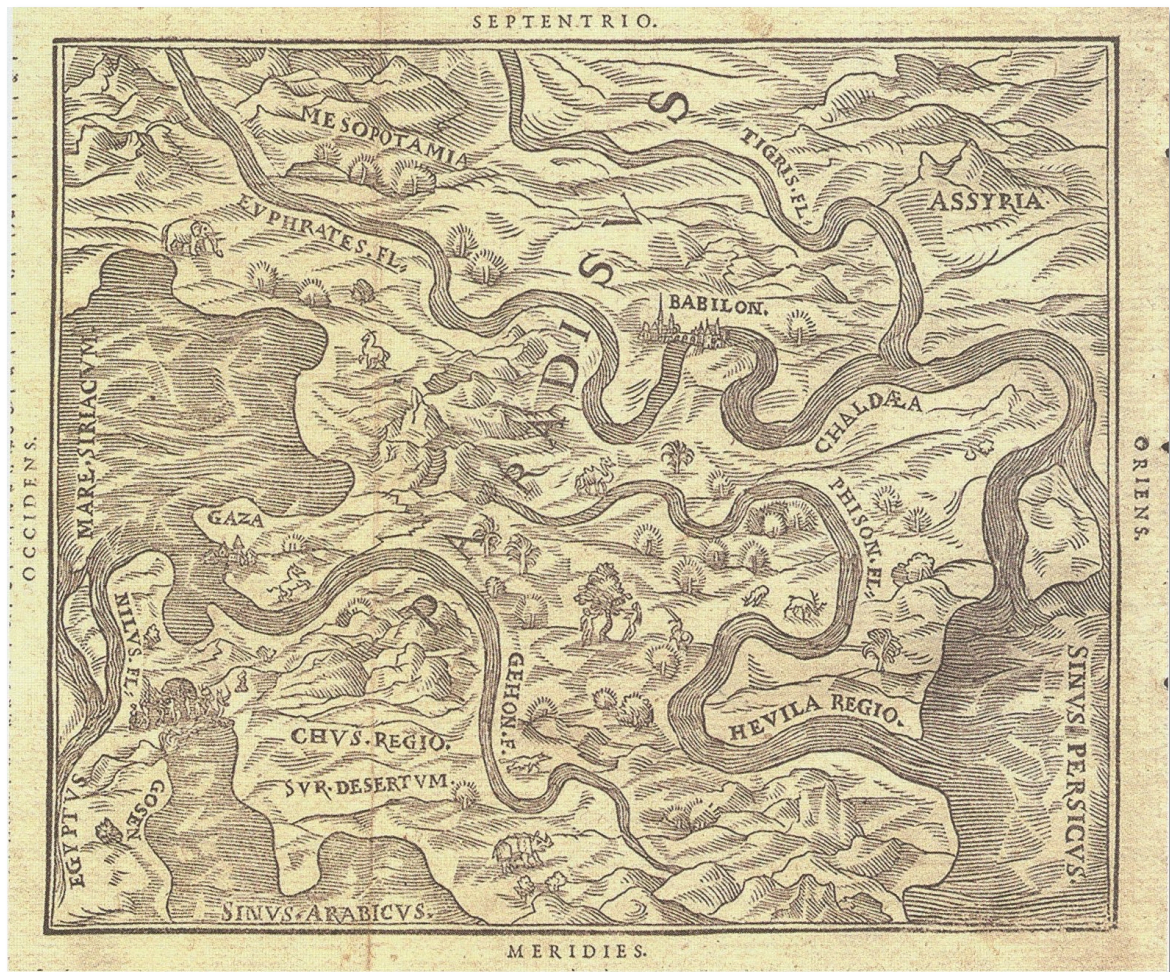
Regnault's account of his journey to the Holy Land includes a discussion, inspired by Calvin's views, of the location of paradise. His map shows the whole middle eastern region and incorporates the Holy Land and the shores of the Mediterranean, Caspian and Black seas. In the lengthy legend below the map, the region is praised as the most fertile and delightful on earth (and the most frequently represented by map makers). The text rehearses Calvin's arguments on the single river and the four heads, but a large rectangular Garden of Eden, surrounding the entire stretch of the single river, has been added to the map, on which 'A' marks the confluence, just outside paradise, of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and 'B' the division of the single river into two branches, again just outside Eden. On Regnault's map, as on other derivatives, Calvin's geography has been further simplified by the removal of the link north of Seleucia between the Tigris and the Euphrates.



Peter Plancius' *Tabula geographica, in qua paradisus, nec non regiones, urbes, oppida. et loca describuntur ... for the beginning of Genesis*, from a Protestant Dutch Bible (Amsterdam-Haarlem: Jacobszoon-Rooman, 1590). 23 x 17 cm. London, British Library, 3041.b.12. Plancius has given the Tigris and the Euphrates their Hebrew names, Hidekel and Phrath, and has identified the rivers Gihon and Pishon and the lands of Havilah and Cush. By showing the geography of the Holy Land in some detail on a map of Mesopotamia that extended as far west as Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea, Plancius was able to present Eden both in its Mesopotamian context and within the wider context of salvation history. The post-Calvin sharpening of the focus on the exact site of Eden reflects the increasing emphasis on the historical aspect maps were now expected to show.



Map of the vast region of paradise (labeled *Paradisus*, from Matthaeus Beroaldus. *Chronicum, Scripturae Sacrae auctoritate constitutum* (Geneva: A. Chuppinus. 1575). p. 88. 12.5 x 15 cm. London. British Library, C79.e.12(1). Beroaldus shows four rivers flowing across the region of paradise (*Paradisus*). Places mentioned in Genesis - Assyria. Cush and Havilah - are denoted with inscriptions. The Tigris and the Euphrates come together in Mesopotamia, the Gihon flows between Egypt and Palestine, and the Phison flows through Arabia into the Persian Gulf. The vignette of the Red Sea crossing is a direct reference to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.



Map of Paradise in Mesopotamia, from Thomas Guarinus's Biblia Sacra (1578).



Athanasius Kircher's Arca Noe, 1675

In one of the strongest physical representations in Athanasius Kircher's *Arca Noë* the earthly image of Paradise is illustrated as a walled domain located between the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates in the Mesopotamian-Persian territory. It is formed as an enclosed square-shaped estate; four gates, which are guarded by four angels, face the cardinal directions. In the middle of the domain two bodies of water meet and the Tree of life is located. It is where Adam and Eve are illustrated by the Tree of knowledge positioned in the bottom-left corner of the Terrestrial Paradise.

Alessandro Scafi summarizes the portrayal of *Paradise* on medieval maps very succinctly. "The paradox of the Christian notion of an earthly *Paradise*, a heavenly locality on earth, was that it was a 'nowhere' that was 'somewhere'. However different from the rest of this world, that no-place (utopia) was part of real geography and mappable. Christianity acknowledged in many different ways the intangible relationship between the post-lapsarian human realm and the perfect communion between man and God that was implied in the idea of an earthly *Paradise*; but the mapping of the *Garden of Eden* in the Christian Middle Ages points with the utmost clarity to the medieval tendency, generally overlooked in modern scholarship, to conceive of a state of human perfection on earth. *Paradise* was not only a vague condition in a future heaven, or an original harmony forever lost in the past, but also an earthly place, different from this world and yet part of it, situated and indicated on maps.

Christian dogma and Biblical lore imposed other figments of the theological imagination on the map of the world. The maps themselves became guides to the Articles of Faith. Every episode and every place mentioned in Scripture required a location and became a tempting arena for Christian geographers. One of the most enticing of these was the *Garden of Eden*. In the eastern part of the world, then at the top of the map, medieval Christians commonly showed a

terrestrial *Paradise* with figures of Adam and Eve and the serpent all surrounded by a high wall or a mountain range. "The First place in the East is Paradise," explained Isidore of Seville (560-636), reputed to be the most learned man of the age, "a garden famous for its delights, where man can never go, for a fiery wall surrounds it and reaches to the sky. Here is the tree of life which gives immortality, here the fountain which divides into four streams that go forth and water the world." The trackless wastes that separated man from *Paradise* were infested with wild beasts and serpents. This orthodox view still left ample room for learned theological debate.

Belief in *Eden* became a pleasure as well as a duty. In Hebrew, pious writers explained. "Eden" meant a place of delight. God had placed Eden on a height, touching the circle of the moon's orbit, so that *Paradise* would stay safe and dry above the waters of the Flood. Among the most popular medieval travel literature were the *Journeys to Paradise*. According to the *iter ad Paradisum*, after Alexander the Great had conquered India he came upon a broad river, the Ganges, on which he embarked with five hundred men. A month later they arrived at a vast walled city where the souls of the just lived until the Last Judgment. That, of course, was the terrestrial *Paradise*.

Paradise fiction became a genre of sacred literature, just as outer space adventure would be a form of science fiction. Adam's son, Seth, according to one popular story, brought back seeds from the *Tree of Knowledge* to plant in Adam's mouth after Adam had died. A tree that sprouted from this seed provided the wood for the cross on which Christ was to be crucified. Another story told how three monks set out from their monastery between the Tigris and the Euphrates to seek the place where "the earth joins the sky." Finally they reached the dark wildernesses of India, where they found dog-headed men, pygmies, and serpents, and saw the altars that had been set up by Alexander the Great to mark the outermost boundaries of his own travels. Across fantastic landscapes peopled with giants and birds that talked, the monks plodded on until, about twenty miles from the terrestrial *Paradise*, they came upon the aged Saint Macarius living in a cave with two friendly lions. He delighted them with stories of the wonders of Paradise, only to turn them back with his warning that Eden could never be entered by living men.

But even on such basic matters as the location of Eden Christian geographers were not unanimous, as can be seen in the maps displayed above. One of the most famous mortal travelers to *Paradise* was the brave Irish monk Saint Brendan (484-578). Believing that *Paradise* was somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean, he sailed westward until after terrifying adventures he came upon a beautiful island of unsurpassed fertility. Saint Brendan confidently asserted that this was *Paradise*, "Promised Land of the Saints." And even those who preferred to locate their *Paradise* elsewhere kept *Saint Brendan's Island* on their maps and charts. The story of this heroic monk was told and retold in Latin, French, English, Saxon, Flemish, Irish, Welsh, Breton, and Scottish Gaelic. His sacred island remained plainly marked on maps for more than a thousand years, at least until 1759. And the pioneers of modern cartography and navigation dutifully tried to find its place. The classic globe-maker Martin Behaim in 1492 (#258) put *Saint Brendan's Island* close to the equator, west of the Canaries, while some found it nearer Ireland, and others saw it in the West Indies. (see separate monograph on the mythical Saint Brendan Island)

The idea of an earthly *Paradise* distinguishable from the heavenly *Paradise* had taken several centuries to evolve. Following Augustine's influential treatment of the subject, the belief that Adam and Eve had lived in a specific region before the Fall, and that this region still existed on earth, was accepted as beyond question. Then, once it was acknowledged that the *Garden of Eden* remained physically present on earth, and once the difference between the terrestrial and the celestial *Paradises* had been established, the difficulty had to be faced as to how to explain

Paradise's intermediate character. Thus, the focus of the debate switched to the problem of distinguishing *Eden* from the earth on which it was literally located. The notion of an earthly *Paradise* involved imagining a place lying somewhere between heaven and earth and that managed to escape the natural conditions of earth. Mapping the *Garden of Eden* presented the ultimate cartographical paradox: how to map a place that was on earth but not of earth."



*A Map of all the Earth and how after the Flood it was divided among the Sons of Noah
by Joseph Moxon, 1681*

While this map provides a reasonably accurate view of the world as known in 1681, it was intended primarily for religious education, bound into copies of English-language bibles and other religious works of the 17th and early 18th centuries. The seven days of creation are illustrated in the panels at the top of the map. Below are the expulsion from Paradise, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, God speaking to Moses, the Ten Commandments, the Crucifixion and the Ascension. The voice of God is represented by Hebrew characters. Several significant biblical sites are shown by name on the map, but most significant locations (including Britain and everything in the Western Hemisphere) are identified by number with a key below. The map is centered on Eden. California appears as an island at the extreme right of the oval map which is surrounded by some fourteen vignette images of Old and New Testament scenes. North America is labeled with "Japhet,"



De Gelegentheit van't Paradys ende't Land Canaan mitsgaders de eerste bewoonde landen Der Patriarchen, uyt de H. schrifture en verscheyden Auctoren bij een gestelt door Nicolaes Visscher

This is an early (1657) example of Nicholas Visscher's map of the Holy Land, or as it is titled (in rough translation) "Paradise, or the Garden of Eden With the Countries circumjacent Inhabited by the Patriarchs". The map covers the region between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf (including the modern day regions of Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Turkey & Iraq), and features a prominent the Garden of Eden located near the city of Babel [Babylon]. The strap-work title along the top of the map is flanked on either side by cartouche scenes from Eden. In the Mediterranean, a sailing ship is being confronted by Jonas's whale. In the lower left quadrant, a decorative scale of miles is topped by an elderly fisherman – one of Visscher's marks. The map itself, combining actual and Biblical geography, features the Land of Nod, the Garden of Eden, the Tower of Babel, and other semi-mythical locations. This map was drawn by Visscher as part of a five part map series for inclusion in Abraham van den Broeck's 1657 *Dutch Staten Bible*. This is the first edition of this important map series that would become basis for numerous other Biblical maps appearing through the 18th century, including those of Stoopendal, Krul and Maxon. Below is the same map in English from 1695.



Detail showing Babel, Nineve and the Garden of Eden Paradise



Paradise or the Garden of Eden With the Countries circumjacent Inhabited by the Patriarchs by Joseph Moxon.

Detailed map of the region around the *Paradise and Garden of Eden*, extending from Cyprus to the Persian Sea, centered on the *Tower of Babel and Nineveh*, dated 1660.

This map of the Levant covers as far west as Asia Minor and the Mediterranean Sea, as well as Egypt, and as far east as *Near Babylonia* (modern day Iran). *Armenia Major* is depicted at the top of the map and the *Deserts of Arabia* at the bottom. Cyprus is visible in the Mediterranean Sea. This is the second of the series of six Biblical maps by Nicolaus Visscher, translated from Dutch to English by Joseph Moxon. There is a simple compass rose in the top left corner, and a scale on the top right.

An that article focuses on the *Chronology* by the Graz Jesuit Joseph Stöcklein (1676–1732), published in 1729, locates *Paradise* in China. Since late antiquity, intellectuals have been crafting chronological works with a view to making apparent God's actions in the world. These attempts were primarily based on the Old Testament, which was seen as a historio-graphical narrative and thus counted as a record of factual truth. New chronographical insights from China, which had been reaching Europe since the beginning of the 17th century, contradicted this exegetical tradition, however. Whoever attempted to relate the new findings arriving from China to the Bible had no choice but to give up certain truths in order to save others. Seen in

this light, the tight framework of biblical truth led directly to creative hypotheses such as Stöcklein's *Chronology*, which demonstrated two main shifts in the conceptualizing of universal history: first, Stöcklein emphasized the significance of the Old Reich and therefore decentered his universal history from western Europe to (mainly) Augsburg and Nuremberg; secondly, he envisaged the Far East rather than the Middle East and Europe as the geographical center of Christian universalism and of the beginning of universal history. One crucial step was his relocation of *Paradise* to the immediate vicinity of China. Discussing the manifold Buddhist, Stöcklein's turned the biblical story of salvation into a Chinese story of salvation.

In the early 1700s Joseph Stöcklein provided precise empirical evidence to support his case that *Paradise* was located in/near China. In fact, Stöcklein wrote about *Paradise* as if it were a place like Paris, Nuremberg or Beijing. From the Nuremberg prime meridian, he calculated, there was a time difference of 5 hours, 27 minutes and 24 seconds to '*Paradise or Lake Kia*'; from there to Beijing, the difference was only a little over an hour. He thus pushed further his statements about the proximity of *Paradise* to China in terms of longitude and geographic accuracy. At the same time, he also stressed his claim to be a reliable mathematician by using irony, which becomes even clearer from another table used to prove that his parallax calculations were correct. Here Stöcklein concluded that the solar eclipse of 1706 would have been visible in *Paradise* at 3 hours, 42 minutes and 24 seconds after solar noon.

These tables clearly were meant to refute criticism and to prove the Jesuit's mathematical prowess. Yet even a stubborn Jesuit would not seriously name *Paradise* as a place for precise calculations. Instead, this particular statement can more fruitfully be read as an ironic comment on the small-minded know-it-alls who had written so many letters and corrected his calculations. These tables are wonderful examples of the empirical approach in the emerging biblical criticism – and also a comment on its limitations.

But where did Stöcklein get the idea of identifying *Paradise* with this so-called *Lake Kia*? The answer to this question goes well beyond the simple identification of a place on Couplet's map and provides a good example of what makes the study of knowledge transfer so complicated.

In the case of Stöcklein's *Chronology*, the idea of identifying *Paradise* with *Lake Kia* was surely not an accident, but Stöcklein himself was apparently unable to explain how he came up with it. This explains why on the one hand he searched for and even invented evidence, while on the other he picked up different traditions of interpreting earthly *Paradise*. Even if he was the first to explicitly identify *Lake Kia* with *Paradise*, this idea did not emerge in a vacuum. Rather, Stöcklein's creative approach was the result of a highly complex process of knowledge transfer in which European, Chinese and Arabic interpretations mutually influenced each other before ending up in the Austrian scholar's crucible. As is so often the case, it is of lesser importance to determine whether Stöcklein fairly and accurately portrayed the knowledge with which he was toying. Indeed, he did not – not least because the lake in question does not actually exist.

In the end the Jesuit found suitable evidence mostly in Muslim and Arabic sources, of all places. Stöcklein writes, somewhat enigmatically, that '*Guilielmus*', the famous bishop of Paris, agreed with Arabs, Syrians and other peoples in the Near East that *Paradise* was located on the other side of the Ganges.



Philippe Couplet, map of China (1687). On the far left is Lake Kia with its four prominent south-flowing rivers. This map was inserted into the *Der Neue Welt-Bott*

If this reference was to the 13th century bishop Guillaume d'Auvergne (1190–1249), who had written a treatise entitled *De Universo*, it was a daring interpretation at best. Guillaume d'Auvergne wrote only about the pleasant climate in India and Egypt, from which he drew the conclusion that *Paradise on Earth* might be a possibility, but he never went as far as actually stating where this *Paradise* would be located.

Stöcklein's second reference was the medieval Muslim scholar Al-Idrīsī (see #219), whose geography had become accessible to Stöcklein through the translation made by the Maronites Gabriel Sionita (1577–1648) and John Ezronita. According to Stöcklein, these two Christian Arabs had written 'that *Paradise was to be found nowhere but in China*'. Eastern Christians—especially those in Syria—were often regarded by Europeans as well informed about the Holy Land and biblical stories. This is true in particular with respect to Sionita and

Ezronita, who for years had been entrusted with translations for the *Paris Polyglot Bible*. Thus, by referring to these two Maronites, Stöcklein could demonstrate how well read he was, since his reading matter included literature from the Orient, and, additionally, his argument was probably strengthened by the circum-stance that Syrian Christians—who came from a region where *Paradise* was usually supposed to lie—of all people claimed that *Paradise* was located in China. However, his attribution of this statement to their work is incorrect. In their *Geographia Nubiensis* of 1619, the Maronites actually put *Paradise* in their home region, somewhere in Syria or Lebanon. Moreover, Sionita was also known for his Arabic and Latin edition of the text referred to as the Testament of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (1630), which Pierre Bayle had discussed extensively in his *Dictionnaire Critique*. Al-Idrīsī, who was a geographer at the court of Sicily in the 12th century, does not even make reference to *Paradise*. He instead mentions Adam's foot-print on the island Sarandīb, where Adam would have descended to earth after the banishment from *Paradise*. The legend of 'Adam's footprint' was an important Brahmin and Persian-Arabic narrative in the Middle Ages that connected Ceylon and India with *Paradise* without localizing *Paradise* at a specific place on earth. Thus, in contrast to Christian medieval world maps, Al-Idrīsī's map of 1154 (#219) does not depict *Paradise*. According to Al-Idrīsī, who relied heavily on Ptolemy, the world is divided into seven climes, each of which consists of ten sections of equal size. In the third zone, section nine, we find the area between Tibet and the far west of China.

Featuring prominently on the map is a large lake from which four rivers flow in each of the cardinal directions. This lake cannot be found in Ptolemy. Al-Idrīsī must have received information about it from travelers. If we compare the position of this lake with Lake Kia on Philippe Couplet's map, they seem to be in roughly the same area. I have not been able to find out for sure whether Stöcklein ever saw Al-Idrīsī's world map in its original form. Only eight copies of the manuscript map from 1154 survive, but research into the reception of Al-Idrīsī has shown its wide influence throughout the Arabic-speaking world and, indirectly, in Christian Europe.

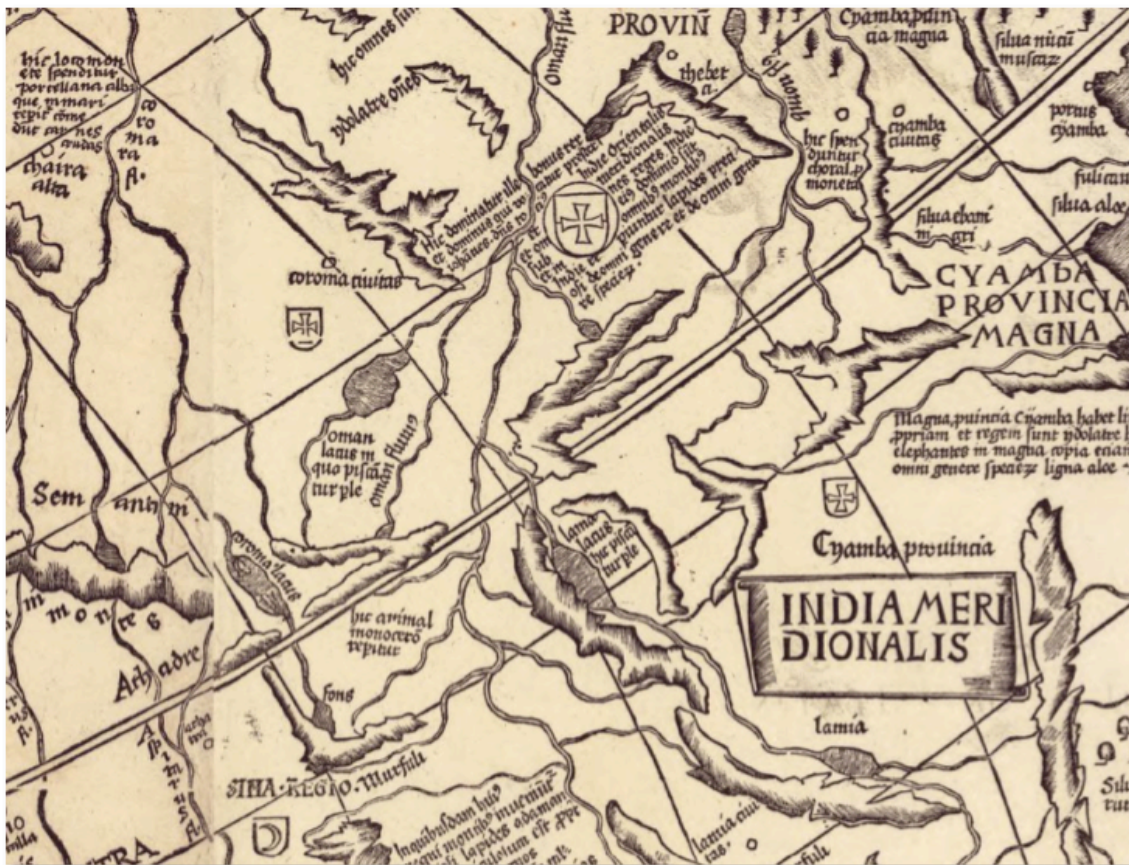
Al-Idrīsī did not describe this lake in his *Geographia*, nor, as mentioned earlier, did he claim that *Paradise* was located on earth, but the position of this lake at the gates of China might explain why Stöcklein mentioned the Muslim geographer in the first place. Al-Idrīsī's map and description of the world are compilations that draw on many different sources, including the stories provided by Turks as well as medieval Arabic travelers to Asia. Through them Al-Idrīsī would have learned of the Buddhist narratives about a sacred lake in the Tibetan Highlands which was considered to be the center of the world according to Buddhist traditions. Some Buddhist maps show this place in a way similar to Al-Idrīsī's map: a big lake from which four rivers spring in each direction. In the myths, this lake is described in the most wonderful terms. The water is so clear that it shines like a mirror. Its shores are colored in gold, silver, lapis lazuli and crystal.

In some versions of the narrative, the rivers first circle the lake before continuing in their respective directions. In others, the lake is furnished with four gates, from which the water spouts; these are described as taking the shapes of a lion, a horse, an elephant and a bull. As late as the 17th century, European voyagers recounted the story of the Ganges arising from a cow's head found in Buddhist narratives. In fact, there were many more tales about this sacred space in the Tibetan highlands, and European travelers eagerly lapped them up. Fernão Mendes Pinto (1509–1583) is considered one of the earliest sources for the location of the lake in the Tibetan Highlands that became known as *Lake Kia*, *Chiamay* or *Chiang Mai*.

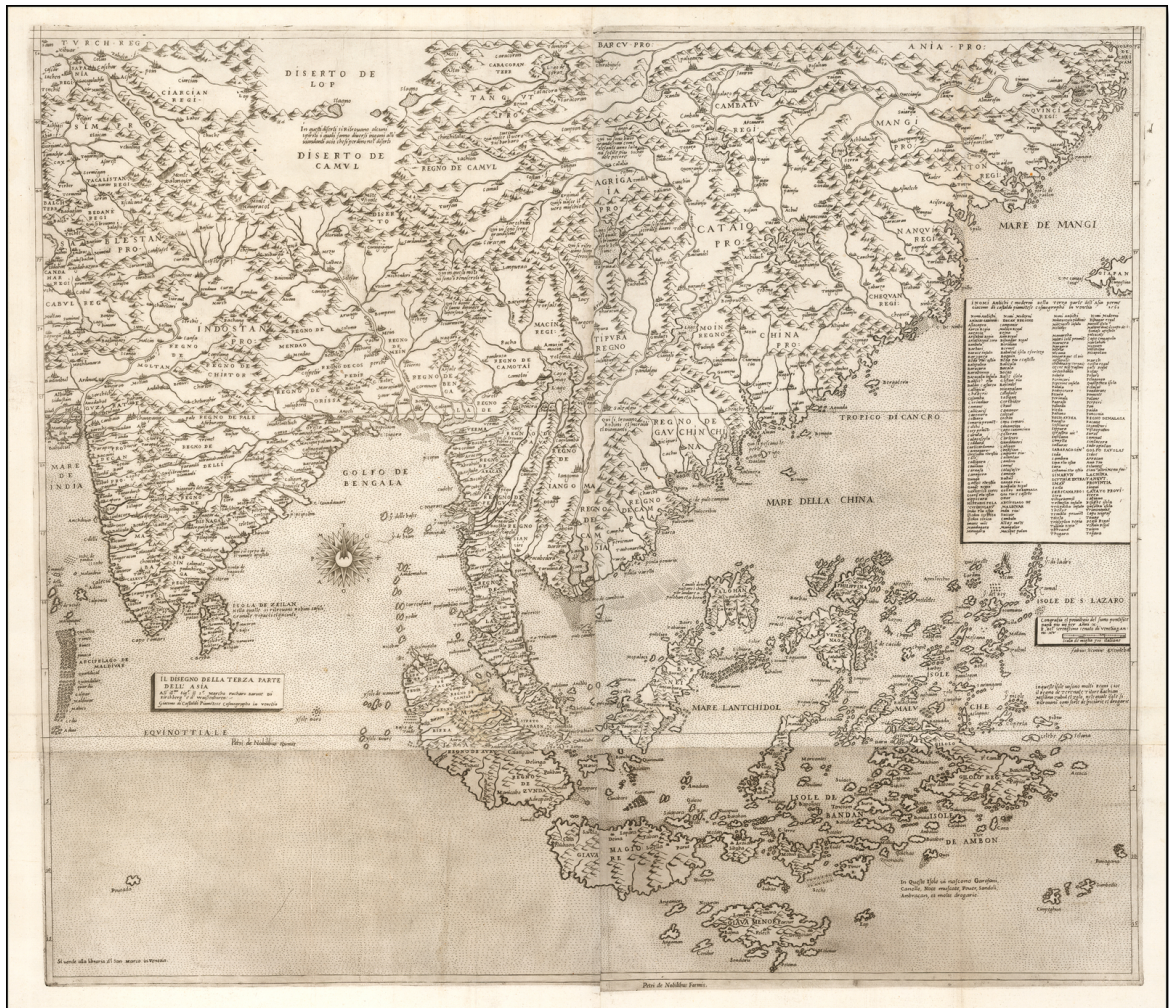
There must have been rumors about it before, because when Mendes Pinto traveled to Asia in the 1540s, he explicitly questioned the locals about this lake and they told him of an

inaccessible place where wild animals, such as lions, elephants and buffalos roamed free. They also mentioned that large deposits of silver, copper, tin, and lead could be found on its shores, and that the inhabitants of the lake traded these for gold, diamonds and crystals.

In a letter to Europe from 1571, Mendes Pinto described this lake as the largest known in the universe. Myths thus blended with stories of everyday life, often incorporating what appeared to be precise empirical information: when asked, the inhabitants of Siam explained that it would take about two and a half months to reach this lake. It is information like this that was used by European cartographers to draw the lake into the maps they made. The first depictions of the lake can perhaps be found in the world maps of Martin Behaim (#258) and Martin Waldseemüller (#310), but with the empirical approach to cartography, the location of *Lake Kia* became increasingly accurate. It is already prominent in Giacomo Gastaldi's (c. 1500–1566) map of Asia. Between 1559 and 1561, the Venetian cosmographer drew a comprehensive tripartite map of Asia in which he combined Ptolemaic geography with the new data brought to Europe by Portuguese travelers. As far as *Lake Kia* is concerned, this appears to be a transitional phase in which the rivers in four cardinal directions were combined with the more pronounced southerly direction of rivers on later maps.



Lake Kia on the 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller (#310)



Giacomo Gastaldi, *map of China (1559–1561)*, edition of 1580:
one of the first depictions of Lake Kia in a European map.

Incidentally, the display of many parallel rivers flowing in a north–south direction had been a staple of Chinese cartography for many centuries.

From the moment the large Ortelius Atlas appeared in the 1570s, *Lake Kia* was included in most European maps of Asia. This tradition persisted for about 150 years, even if European cartographers did not agree on exactly where this lake was. Initially, it would usually be situated somewhere in the south—as was the case with Gastaldi’s map—more or less on the Tropic of Cancer. Later versions tended to locate it further north, around the 30th parallel as in the map printed in Stöcklein’s *Neue Welt-Bott*. Sometimes, the lake was moved to the west, for example in the 1667 *China Illustrata* by Athanasius Kircher. Most frequently, however, the lake marked the entryway to China. The lake eventually even started to appear on Chinese and Japanese maps through European influences, most notably through the maps of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). It is ironic that this mythical lake appeared first in those Chinese, Japanese or Korean maps that sought to integrate new empirical knowledge of mapmaking from Europe. Given all this, it should come as no surprise that the Jesuit Martino Martini also added *Lake Kia* to his maps of China.



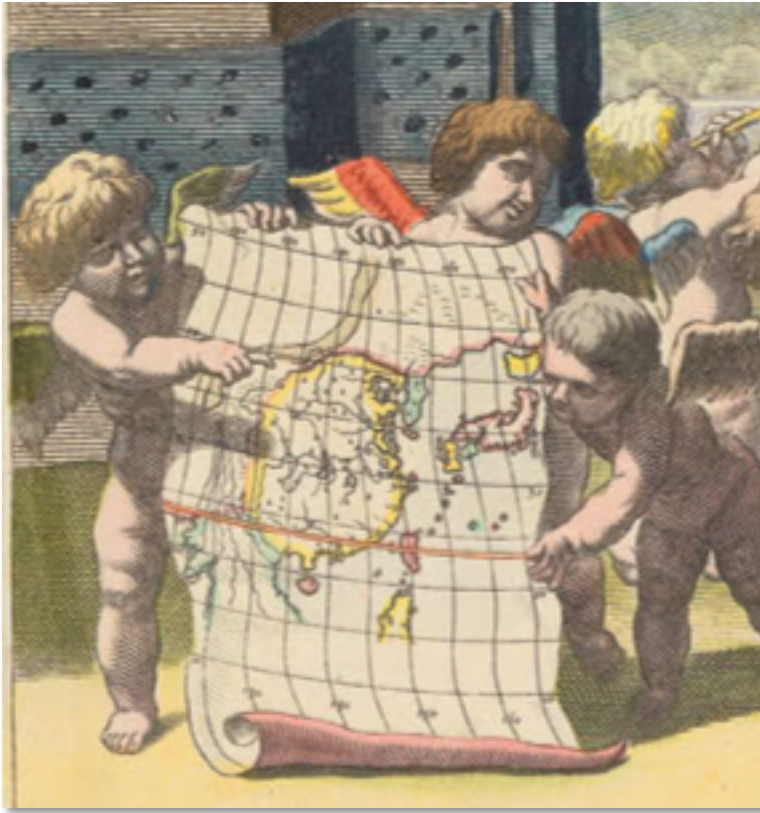
Detail of Gastaldi's map. This lake appears in the middle of the image, with rivers flowing from it in the four cardinal directions and prominent rivers running south.

As far as I can discover, Martini was thus the first European to describe the Ganges as one of the rivers springing from *Lake Kia*. In doing so, he latched onto one of the Buddhist narratives of the sacred lake in the Tibetan highlands. It is quite possible that Martini knew the account by Juan González de Mendoza (1545–1618), a member of the Order of Saint Augustine, about the Muslim king of Bengal who sent people up the Ganges to find *Paradise*. He certainly must have heard of the Jesuit Antonio Freire de Andrade (1580–1634), who left the Mughal court with a companion in 1624 to find his way into the Himalayas because 'he had some revelation from God about his journey' which implied that he would be certain to find a Christian community in the lands of Tibet.

The significance of *Lake Kia* to Martini's views is illustrated by the title page of his *Novus Atlas Sinensis*, where the lake and its rivers are enlarged to the point of covering over half of the small map, even though the lake is actually outside the Chinese empire. Its prominence in this illustration reflects the importance and the exclusively positive associations that this place doubtlessly had for Martini. In the accompanying figure below, the importance of *Lake Kia* to the Jesuit Martino Martini can be discerned from the title page of his *Novus Atlas Sinensis*. Although it was considered to be outside the borders of the Chinese empire, the oversized lake with its rivers flowing south is depicted prominently on the left side, where it is almost a third the size of all of China.

And elsewhere he contends that the nearby province of 'Xensi' was the oldest province of China, settled by the Chinese only shortly after the Flood. It is conceivable that Martini entertained the thought that *Lake Kia* was *Paradise*, though he never made this explicit. That honor belongs to Joseph Stöcklein, who officially declared *Lake Kia* to be the *Garden of Eden* and thereby integrated a Buddhist sacred space into a Judeo-Christian universal history.





Source: M. Martini, *Novus Atlas Sinensis* [...], Amsterdam 1655, in *Opera omnia*, edited by Giuliano Bertuccioli, vol. 3, 1/2, title page (detail)



1725



Garden of Eden by Calmet, 1789





De Geleentheit van t'Paradys ende t'Landt Canaan, Mitsgaders de Eerst Bewoonde Landen der Patriarchen uyt de H. Schrifte en verscheiden Auctoren by een gestelt door HK en MD by Nicholas Visscher, 1690-1730

A map of the region between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf with *Paradise*, depicted to the east of *Babylon*. Two engravings; Adam and Eve with the serpent, and the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Further decorated with compass rose, scale of miles cartouche, and Noah's Ark. This map is derived from Nicholas Visscher's 1657 map of the same name, and though cartographically nearly identical, features updated decorative elements. The map was published as part of the Dutch *Keur Bible*. At the top left and right are two early scenes from the book of Genesis, showing Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. At the bottom center is a massive image of the departure of Noah's ark during the first states of the inundation, flanked on either side by Adam and Eve with the serpent, and the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Further decorated with compass rose, scale of miles cartouche and a depiction of Jonas and the whale.

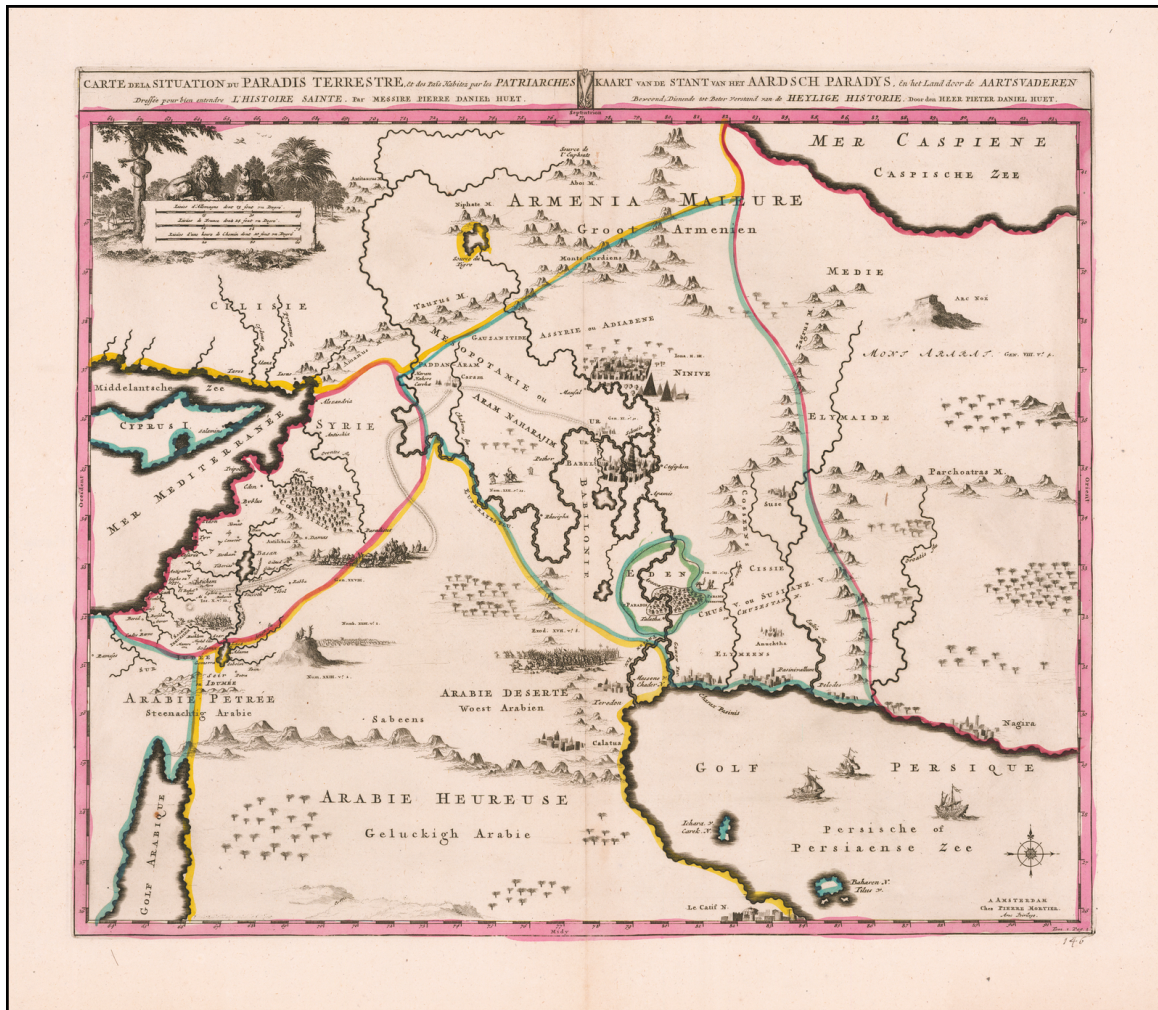






Carte Generale, 1783, P. Buache





Carte de la Situation du Paradis Terrestre, Et des Pis Habitez par les Patriarches . . . , 1725
 Detailed map of the Holy Land and the Middle East, centered on the Garden of Eden

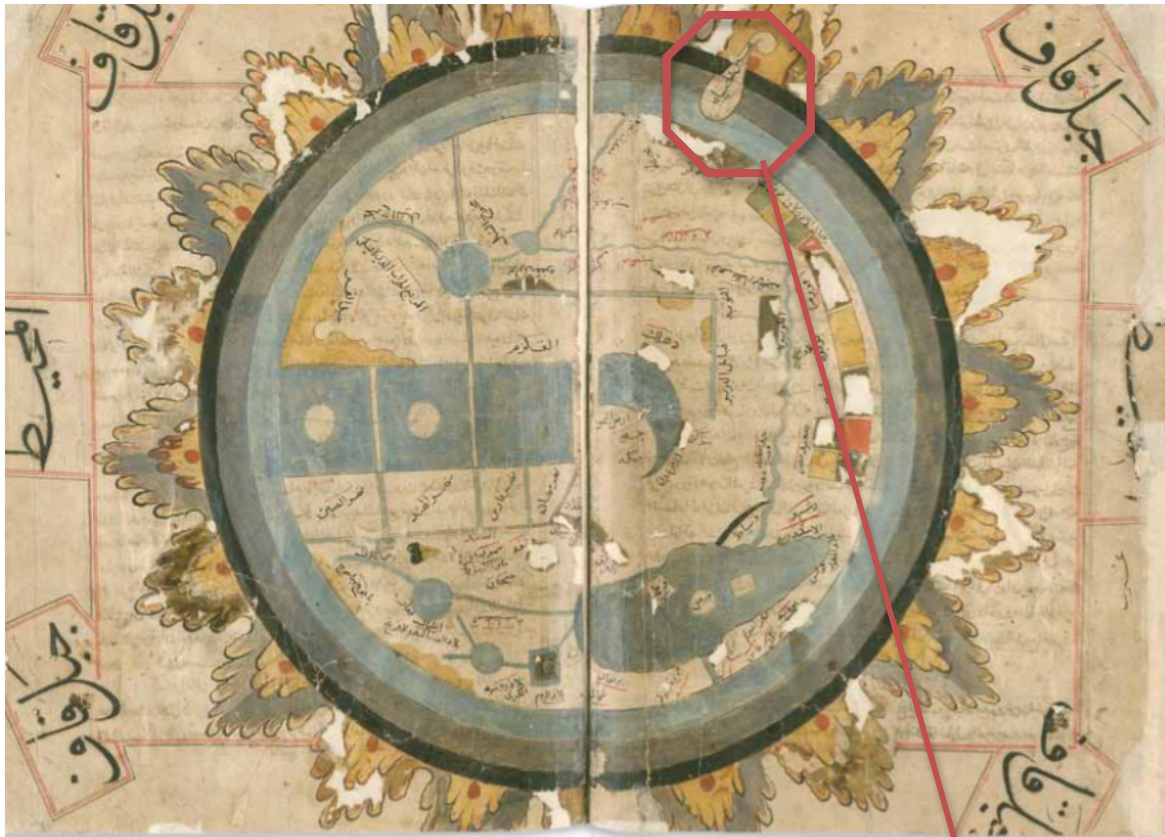
This map includes the travels of several of the Patriarchs and graphic depictions of Babylon and several other cities. Larger cities named include: Ninive, Babel, Calatua, Teredon, Sichem, Jerusalem, Antiocha (Syria), Charax Pasinis, Pasinivallum, Anuchtha, Pelodes, Suse, Nagira, Le Catif N. (across from the Island of Baharn N. and Tilus v.). The map appeared in *Histoire du Vieux et du Nouveau Testament*, first published by Covens & Mortier in 1725.

What has been discussed thus far has been from the European Christian perspective. However, the Middle East Arabs also pondered over the concept of *Paradise*.

In Arabic literature, by far the most common term for paradise is *jannah*, meaning 'garden'. It is used in two senses: (1) the primordial garden, the dwelling place of Adam and Eve, and (2) the after-world of the righteous. *Jannah* is not the only term for *Paradise*, however, for the term *firdaws* – an Arabic form of an Old Iranian word meaning enclosure, that passed into Greek as *παράδεισος* from which we get our word *paradise* – was also used occasionally to designate paradise in general as well as a walled garden of trees within paradise. *Paradise*, and its associated rewards, forms one of the major themes in the *Qur'ān*. The word *jannah* occurs 77 times in the *Qur'ān*, while the term *firdaws* occurs only twice (*Qur'ān* 18:107 and 23:11), and in one of those occurrences the phrase is *jannat al-firdaws* ('the garden of paradise').

In Islam, the major source for information about the nature and structure of *Paradise* was the first-hand experience of the Prophet Muhammad himself. Through various visions in a waking state, and through dreams, Muhammad was able to actually observe, it is believed, aspects of paradise and hell. This first-hand autopsy of *Paradise* on the part of the Prophet, as elaborated in post-Qur'anic narratives, was fundamental in establishing the Islamic conception of *Paradise*.

The legendary *Mountain of Qāf* was said to encompass the sea surrounding the inhabited world. It was the source of all mountains on the earth and made of green topaz or emerald, causing the greenish color of the sky which is reflected onto the green sea. The *Mountain of Qāf* is occasionally illustrated on Islamic world maps, a particularly outstanding example being included in a copy made in 1622 (H 1032) of the *Marvels of Things Created and Miraculous Aspects of Things Existing* (*Kitab 'Aja'ib al-makluqat wa-ghara'ib al-mawjudat*) composed by the cosmographer al-Qazwini (d. 682/1283, #222). That map shows the inhabited earth surrounded by a sea (a blue circle); the sea, in turn, is enclosed by a ring of impassable land. Beyond the ring (looking like mountains of fire) is the legendary *Mountain of Qāf*. Through a break in the ring representing the *Mountain of Qāf* and the ring of uncrossable land, the *Fountain of Life* ('*ayn al-hayāh*') pours into the Surrounding Sea.



al-Qazwini world map, 1622, oriented with South at the top with the Fountain of Life (#222)

The relevance of these legends to the depiction of *Paradise* is that because Adam was ordered to 'go down' (*habata*) to earth – clearly leaving *Paradise* – *Paradise* could not by definition be anywhere on earth. The striking feature of all accounts of *Paradise* in Islam is its great distance and its remoteness from earth and from humans. While its structure and contents were described in materialistic or worldly terms, it was not 'worldly' in the sense of being part of a

sub-lunar or sub-stellar world. Because of this extreme distance, there was no concept at all of an earthly paradise. Paradise was also said to be of extreme dimensions. A paradise whose width is equal the width of heaven and earth is mentioned in the *Qur' ān* (57:21) Consequently, there was no room for it to be illustrated on Islamic maps of the world, even though it was a common cartographic convention in nearby societies with whom Islam shared many of its cosmological theories.

The idea of *Paradise* still endured for some time, but rather than being conceived as a geographical reality, it was progressively assumed to be an historical reality destroyed by the Flood. Where at first it had been characterized by a distance in geographical space, it now became increasingly put at a distance in time. Within this framework, the African *Paradise* could easily be substituted, as was the case from the mid-16th century onwards, for other locations such as Mesopotamia and the Holy Land. On the other hand, if *Paradise* was only an historical reminiscence, there was no reason for including this feature in contemporary maps, unless they were deliberately conceived of as historical maps. Alternatively, the "Lost Paradise" could also be found by reconsidering its allegorical nature. The climate of opinion of the period is well illustrated by Abraham Ortelius who, after discussing the various sites of *Paradise* in the past, says in the English edition of his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1606): "By Paradise I do thinke the blessed life to be understood."



Map of the Terrestrial Paradise, 1780, by Emanuel Bowen

This map was drawn by English cartographer Emanuel Bowen. It is also based on religious beliefs. The Terrestrial Paradise, Eden, is shown on the territory of Armenia, between the lakes Van and Kaputan. The map lists four rivers flowing from the Bible Paradise: Aras (Gihon), Pison, Euphrates and Tigris. At the center of the map is Mount Ararat. This so-called 'curiosity map' is entitled 'A Map of the Terrestrial Paradise', i.e. the Garden of Eden, which was a common perception of the area from the Middle Ages. There are many versions of this map, including those of Moxon, Kircheri, Stackhouse, Vaugondy, Buache and others. This shows Eden located on Mount Ararat situated in the middle. The Rivers Euphrates, Araxes and Tigris have their sources in this area..

Alfred Hiatt asks how was it possible to represent the unknown, either alongside or in opposition/apposition to the known? Alessandro Scafi's book *Mapping Paradise* asks the same question of a sacred, rather than secular, space. He describes mapping *Paradise* on earth as 'one

of the most powerful expressions of the fundamental tension between the locative and utopian tendencies in Christianity', an act that 'pointed to both the reality and the loss of a perfect human nature in paradise'. Precisely the same answer cannot be given for the *Antipodes*, however, because this was a space without the biblical and patristic authorization possessed by *Paradise*. The terrestrial *Paradise* may have been located in the *Antipodes*, as some 13th and 14th century theologians dared to propose, but this was a solution to the question of the representation of *Paradise*, not to that of the *Antipodes*. Instead, the representation of the *Antipodes* should be explained not in terms of tendencies in Christianity, but in terms of the political, historiographical, and literary appeal and necessity of the idea. Consolidation of political or religious identities depends on acts of representation: in their Ciceronian deployment, lands beyond the known world must be seen - and seen to be seen - in order to focus attention on *patria*; even to deny unknown lands and peoples, in the manner of Augustine, was nevertheless to advert to their theoretical presence.

Excerpted from *Armenia: The Forgotten Paradise*

The Biblical account of the *Garden of Eden* has for long preoccupied the minds and imaginations of theologians, believers and countless adventurers of the past. Many have attempted to identify the location of the garden and put forward theories ranging from the underground, the north pole and even the surface of the moon. However if the location of the *Terrestrial Paradise* is to be understood according to scriptures, there is only one place that fits the description. That place is historic Armenia.

The Bible mentions a spring in the Garden which parts into four major rivers, including Tigris and the Euphrates. Tigris and Euphrates both have their headwaters in the area surrounding Mt. Ararat in historic Armenia. Many Biblical scholars have therefore placed the *Garden of Eden* in Armenia. They have argued that posterity of Seth and Noah's Ark have remained close to Eden. Thus the birthplace of mankind is also the place of rebirth. These accounts are supported by ancient believes of the people of Mesopotamia, who often considered the Armenian Highlands to be the dwellings of the Gods (*Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 1894).

In his memoirs Lord Byron writes:

"If the Scriptures are rightly understood, it was in Armenia that Paradise was placed. – Armenia, which has paid as dearly as the descendants of Adam for that fleeting participation of its soil in the happiness of him who was created from its dust. It was in Armenia that the flood first abated, and the dove alighted. But with the disappearance of Paradise itself may be dated almost the unhappiness of the country; for though long a powerful kingdom, it was scarcely ever an independent one, and the satraps of Persia and the pachas of Turkey have alike desolated the region where God created man in his own image." – Armenian exercises and poetry, 1886

Lord Byron (1886) *Armenian Exercises and Poetry*

That Armenia was once considered the location of *Terrestrial Paradise* can be attested from old maps and theological records. Alessandro Scafi (2007) in his work "*Finishing the unfinished: Paradise in Fausto da Longiano's vernacular translation of Piccolomini's Cosmographia* (1544), describes Fausto and his thoughts on the location of terrestrial Eden. He writes:

"As a possible location, Fausto (1544) proposed Armenia, a region which in the sixteenth century included the area between the upper Euphrates and Lake Urmia, the Black Sea and the Syrian desert. The identity of two of the four rivers named in Genesis, the Tigris and the Euphrates, was uncontroversial, and both rivers were known to rise in Armenia. The more problematic Gihon and Pishon could be identified amongst the local rivers (for Fausto, the Araxes and the Cyrus)."

Alessandro Scafi (2007), *Finishing the unfinished: Paradise in Fausto da Longiano's vernacular translation of Piccolomini's Cosmographia* (1544)

Joseph E. Duncan (1972) likewise recounts:

"Both Pererius and Lapidé had suggested Armenia as logical location for Eden and paradise. Johann Vorstius, maintaining that Scripture clearly stated that the great river arose in Eden itself, also contended that Eden and paradise must be in Armenia.

One of the most complete of the earlier arguments for an Armenian paradise was offered by Carver in a tract publication in 1666... He found the site of Eden in Armenia Major, on the south side of Mount

Taurus. He speculated that paradise might have been transformed into a nitrous lake which Pliny had said was located in this area."

Joseph E. Duncan (1972) *Milton's Earthly Paradise: A Historical Study of Eden*, University of Minnesota Press; Minnesota Archive Editions edition (July 6, 1972)

17th century French scholar Joseph Pitton de Tournefort writes:

"And if we may suppose the Terrestrial Paradise to have been a place of considerable extent, and to have retained some of its beauties, notwithstanding the alterations made in the Earth at the Flood, and since that time; I don't know a finer spot to which to assign this wonderful place, than the Country of the Three-Churches (Echmiadzin-Armenia), about twenty French leagues distant from the Heads of Euphrates and Araxes, and near as many from the Phasis." - A Voyage Into the Levant (1741)

In their *Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (1894), John McClintock and James Strong recount nine principal theories of the proposed location of earthly paradise. Armenia is considered the most likely location of Eden.

"The opinion which fixes Eden in Armenia we have placed first, because it is that which has obtained most general support, and seems nearest the truth. (See No. vi.) For if we may suppose that, while Cain moved to the East (Gen. iv, IG), the posterity of Seth remained in the neighborhood of the primeval seat of mankind, and that Noah's ark rested not very far from the place of his former abode, then Mount Ararat in Armenia becomes a connecting point between the antediluvian and post-diluvian worlds (Gen. viii, 4)"

Eden is shortly described as follows:

"Eden was a tract of country, and that in the most eligible part of it was the Paradise, the garden of all delights, in which the Creator was pleased to place his new and pre-eminent creature, with the inferior beings for his sustenance and solace."

John McClintock & James Strong (1894) *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

"As nearly as we can gather from the Scriptural description, Eden was a tract of country, the finest imaginable, laying probably between the 35th and the 40th degree of N. latitude, of such moderate elevation, and 80 adjusted, with respect to mountain ranges, and watersheds, and forests, as to preserve the most agreeable and salubrious conditions of temperature and all atmospheric changes. Its surface must therefore have been constantly diversified by hill and plain. In the finest part of this land of Eden, the Creator had formed an enclosure, probably by rocks, and forests, and rivers, and had filled it with every product of nature conducive to use and happiness. Due moisture, of both the ground and the air, was preserved by the streamlets from the nearest hills, and the rivulets from the more distant; and such streamlets and rivulets, collected according to the levels of the surrounding country ("it proceeded from Eden") flowed off afterwards in four larger streams, each of which thus became the source of a great river. Here, then, in the south of Armenia, after the explication we have given, it may seem the most suitable to look for the object of our exploration, the site of Paradise."

John McClintock & James Strong (1894) *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

That the Biblical rivers cannot be identified with Nile (as some would claim) is described as follows:

"That the Hiddekel (this name is said to be still in use among the tribes who live upon its banks—Col.Chesney, *Exp. to Tigris and Euphrates*, i, 13) is the Tigris, and the Phrath the Euphrates, has never been denied, except by those who assume that the whole narrative is a myth which originated elsewhere, and was adapted by the Hebrews to their own geographical notions. As the former is the name of the great river by which Daniel sat (Dan. x, 4), and the latter is the term uniformly applied to the Euphrates in the Old Testament, there seems no reason to suppose that the appellations in Gen. ii, 14 are to be understood in any other than the ordinary sense. One circumstance in the description is worthy of observation. Of the four rivers, one, the Euphrates, is mentioned by name only, as if that were sufficient to identify it. The other three are defined according to their geographical positions, and it is fair to conclude that they were therefore rivers with which the Hebrews were less intimately acquainted. If this be the case, it is scarcely possible to imagine that the Gihon, or, as some say, the Pison, is the Nile, for that must have been even more familiar to the Israelites than the Euphrates, and have stood as little in need of a definition."

John McClintock & James Strong (1894) Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature.

That Eden is described in a post-deluvian manner as opposed to the Lutheran idea of geography being altered due to the flood is explained as follows:

"Nor will it do to suppose that in former ages great changes had taken place, which have so disguised the rivers in question that their course, connection, and identity are not now traceable ; for two of the rivers, at least, remain to this day essentially the same as in all historic times, and the whole narrative of Moses is evidently adapted to the geography as it existed in his own day, being constantly couched in the present tense, and in terms of well-known reference as landmarks.

Luther, rejecting the forced interpretations on which the theories of his time were based, gave it as his opinion that the garden remained under the guardianship of angels till the time of the Deluge, and that its site was known to the descendants of Adam; but that by the flood all traces of it were obliterated. But, as before remarked, the narrative is so worded as to convey the idea that the countries and rivers spoken of were still existing in the time of the historian. It has been suggested that the description of the *Garden of Eden* is part of an inspired antediluvian document (Morren, *Rosenmüller's Geogr.* i, 92). The conjecture is beyond criticism; it is equally incapable of proof or disproof, and has not much probability to recommend it. The effects of the flood in changing the face of countries, and altering the relations of land and water, are too little known at present to allow any inferences to be drawn from them."

John McClintock & James Strong (1894) Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature.

In his memoirs "Armenia, Travels and Studies" famous Brit H. F. B. Lynch writes:

"What attracted me to Armenia? One inducement was curiosity: what lay beyond those mountains, drawn in a wide half-circle along the margin of the Mesopotamian plains? The sources of the great rivers which carried me southwards, a lake with the dimensions of an inland sea, the mountain of the Ark, the fabled seat of Paradise."

Armenia, Travels and Studies H. F. B. Lynch (1901)

During her travels in Armenia, missionary Maria A. West wrote:

"This is the Christian Crusade of the nineteenth century; far exceeding in moral sublimity that of the olden time, when the kings of the earth banded themselves together to rescue the Holy Land from the hand of the Turk ! How wonderful that the Great Commission, the Master's last Command, uttered in this very land, more than eighteen hundred years ago, should have been caught up, and re-echoed in the New World, by a nation not yet a century old! That scores of its sons and daughters should carry the "

glad tidings" from the Caspian and Black Seas on the north, beyond the Mediterranean on the south: In the country of Eden, and Ararat, the cradle of the human race."

Maria A. West (1875), Romance of Missions: or, Inside Views of Life and Labor, Land of Ararat.

"A lovely lake, like that of Galilee, sleeps within their embrace; a branch of the Euphrates curves its gleaming arm around this wondrous mosaic of emerald and agate, carnelian and onyx, with the golden sunlight resting upon embowered villages, of which we count twenty-five without, and fifty with the aid of a glass, their beaten paths crossing and re-crossing the plain, in every direction.



It may indeed have been, as the people say, "the very Garden of Eden" where Adam and Eve together watched the opening of blushing flowers and the ripening of luscious fruits, after the marriage ceremony "the crowning" as the Orientals call it had been performed ; for, "in the day that God created man male and female created He them, and BLESSED THEM, and CALLED THEIR NAME ADAM." Here, perhaps, they plucked and ate the forbidden fruit, whose prolific seeds have borne bitter harvest all over the face of the wide, wide world!"

Maria A. West (1875), Romance of Missions: or, Inside Views of Life and Labor, Land of Ararat.

And this lost Paradise, so long trodden under foot by the Destroyer, "her hedges broken down, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her, wasted by the boar out of the wood, and devoured by the wild beast of the field:" -This vineyard, planted "eastward" -by God's "right hand" -at the opening of man's history - ("a river went out to water it;" and from thence it was parted and became four heads ; and the fourth river is "Euphrates:") -This long-deserted Garden is to be "regained" for the "second Adam," and made to "blossom as the rose;" to " blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing ; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon ; and the REDEEMED shall walk there."

Maria A. West (1875), Romance of Missions: or, Inside Views of Life and Labor, Land of Ararat.

Our national birthday of freedom finds us on these distant heights in the land which was the cradle of the human race the land of Ararat, the country, if not the Garden of Eden, where we may suppose our first parents wandered after their expulsion from Paradise, and obtained their bread by the sweat of their brow. And we, their self-exiled children, are striving to undo the mischief which their disobedience brought on these fair plains, and among these smiling valleys and rugged mountains.

Maria A. West (1875), Romance of Missions: or, Inside Views of Life and Labor, Land of Ararat.

The Armenian language belongs to the Indo-Germanic family, enriched with many Sanscrit words, but having no affinity to the Semitic, or any of the more modern tongues. The people claim that it was the language of paradise, and will be the language of the heavenly world.

Maria A. West (1875), Romance of Missions: or, Inside Views of Life and Labor, Land of Ararat.

Paradise

Hamed Khosravi

July 4, 2011

The word *Paradise*, as the very image of a celestial garden, ultimately entered most European languages (cf. French *paradis*, German *Paradies*, Italian *paradiso*, Latin *paradisus*) via Greek *παράδεισος* [*paradeisos*]. However, its Persian origin is more of a political concept rather than its later (religious) derivations. Etymologically, the very root of the word can be traced in the Old Persian term *pai-ri-daeza*. It is combined of two parts: '*pai-ri*' (cf. Sanskrit *piri*, Greek *περι*), which literally means 'around', and '*daeza*' as 'pile or heap'. The second part, however, is the origin of the words 'دژ' [*dezh*] or '*diza*', in modern Persian all stand for 'fort' or 'enclosure'. '*Daeza*' also has another root in the Indo-Iranian verb '*dhaizh*' that originally means 'to construct out of earth', and the noun '*dhaizha*', 'that which has been built out of earth'.

This definition implies on the presence of the 'wall' constructed out of earth; a fortified space surrounded by formidable walls. It exactly matches the Persian translation of the Avestan word '*pai-ri-daeza*' (in Vendidad, Fargard 3 sec. 18) as *chineh*, which literally means 'clay wall'-used to mark a territory or land['*چینه*' belonging to someone, like the wall of a garden, village or a city. It implicitly indicates the non-defensive characteristics of this wall; it separates to define it. However there is an historical and archaeological evidence of topological differences between this kind of border and the defensive wall. This 'enclosed estate' occurs only once in the entire *Avesta*, but that occurrence is an extremely significant one. It is where Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord/ God) describes an earthly place:[1]

There, on that place, shall the worshippers of Mazda erect an enclosure, and therein shall they establish him with food, therein shall they establish him with clothes, with the coarsest food and with the most worn-out clothes. That food he shall live on, those clothes he shall wear, and thus shall they let him live, until he has grown to the age of a Hana, or of a Zaurura, or of a Pairishta-khshudra.[2]

This can be summarized in three points: paradise literally (and originally) means 'walled (enclosed) estate;' it insists on the idea of the wall as the 'divider of space' when it defines what does and what does not belong to the dominant power (the owner). The wall here is not a defensive wall; the word '*daeza*' is literally rooted in a verb that means 'to construct from the earth' or 'to be made of clay'.[3]

It divides and separates therefore it produces space. The original description of paradise in the *Avesta* explicitly illustrates an image of an earthly place. "It signifies and has the sense of a dwelling place, earthen enclosure, of those intimately associated with death:"[4] the place where you should eat and wear clothes, the place that you should live in: the city.

This idea of city for the Persians was firmly bound to the ultimate goal of creation, which according to *Mazdaean-Zoroastrian* ideology is 'happiness for mankind' (cf. Old Persian *siyati martyahya*);[5] the word *siyati* (happiness) appears in Modern Persian as شادی [*sadi*]. It is the divine power (the sovereign state, the emperor), which should re-establish this happiness throughout the empire by literally constructing the perfect model. This 'ideal state of peace', appears in the form of the walled estate, by preventing the main three evil forces: enemy, lie and famine. It is in a way the restoration of the ideal moment of creation. Therefore, Paradise is "a space of re-creation in the most precise and most profound sense. The surviving descriptions of *paradeisos* consistently emphasize their exquisite beauty, their abundance of water, and the profusion of plants and/or animals with which they were filled: that is, the elements which constitute the sustenance – and, more important – the happiness of mankind." [6]

Consequently, Paradise becomes an apparatus to divide the evil from the good, enemy from friend and the city from the rest of the territory, to fundamentally build the state of well-being. Thus, it becomes the archetype of power to expand the empire, to expand peace and happiness in such an extent that “the earth would become part of the empire, the empire would become paradise.”[7]

Paradise as a Garden

The quest for the most privileged place to live is usually associated with the idea of Paradise. However, the conventional understanding of the word – Paradise as the sacred garden – does not resemble any earthly dimension. While through these searches the idea of the terrestrial Paradise has been differentiated from its celestial image, these two dimensions still overlap in some crucial narratives. The very root of the word *pairi-daeza*, nevertheless, does not carry any image of a holy secured garden. However, it is extensively promoted and supported by religious beliefs. Jewish, Christian[8] and Islamic[9] texts have signified Paradise as the utmost sacred and protected place. It has been mostly described as the place which has been promised to the righteous and faithful people as the reward after their death. These narratives employ the most ambitious earthly elements to illustrate the heavenly scene, offering geographical codes which indicate some possible historical locations in which the holy garden was actualized.[10]

In one of the strongest physical representations in Athanasius Kircher’s *Arca Noe* [see page 92] the earthly image of Paradise is illustrated as a walled domain located between the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates in the Mesopotamian-Persian territory. It is formed as an enclosed square-shaped estate; four gates, which are guarded by four angels, face the cardinal directions. In the middle of the domain two bodies of water meet and the Tree of life is located. It is where Adam and Eve are illustrated by the Tree of knowledge positioned in the bottom-left corner of the *Terrestrial Paradise*.

The image, apparently, follows the description of the *Garden of Eden* in the *Book of Genesis*. Originally, it is in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, in which for the first time the idea of paradise coincided with the image of garden.[12] J.F. Driscoll (1912) in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* under the term ‘*Terrestrial Paradise*’ writes: “The association of the term [Paradise] with the abode of our first parents does not occur in the Old Testament Hebrew. It originated in the fact that the word *paradeisos* was adopted, though not exclusively, by the translators of the *Septuagint* to render the Hebrew for the *Garden of Eden* described in the second chapter of *Genesis*. It is likewise used in diverse other passages of the *Septuagint* where the Hebrew generally has ‘garden’, especially if the idea of wondrous beauty is to be conveyed.”[13]

One of these comes in the *Song of Solomon*, roughly contemporary with Xenophon, which describes a royal garden in fabulously sensual language and images: “a large and beautiful *paradeisos*, possessing all things that grow in the various seasons”[14] and another as “a large and beautiful *paradeisos*, shaggy with all kinds of trees.”[15] In fact, it was by the Greek authors which the image of Persian (or in that time Achaemenid) *pairi-daeza* represented as an exotic planted oasis. However due to the hostile landscape of the Persian territory, *pairi-daeza* (the city) was an exceptional estate. Various trees, animals and irrigation system are parts of the microcosmic model of the imperial economy, where all manner of goods and resources flowed from the provinces to the center. The wall (*pairi-daeza*) can be re-evaluated as the managerial tool in which the central power uses to define the territory.

1. For the English translation of *Avesta* (Fargard 3, section 18) see <http://bit.ly/kGGqkP> and for Farsi: <http://bit.ly/mqdMVs>

2. *Hana* means, literally, 'an old man;' *Zaurura*, 'a man broken down by age;' *Pairishta-khshudra*, 'one whose seed is dried up.' These words have acquired the technical meanings of 'fifty, sixty, and seventy years old.'

3. Lincoln, B., 'The House of Clay', *Indo-Iranian Journal* Vol. 24 (1982)

4. Healy, P., 'La Difesa della Natura,' (2007). See: <http://bit.ly/lssCLp>

5. According to Achaemenid inscriptions, it is the King's (the emperor's) duty to restore the lost happiness of mankind. It has been written in Darius's tomb (Naqs-i-Rostam): "The great God is Ahura Mazda; who created the earth; who created the sky; who created mankind; who established happiness for mankind; who made Darius the king..."

6. Lincoln, B., 'A la recherche du paradis perdu,' *History of Religions* (43) (Chicago, 2003)

7. Ibid.

8. The term *Paradise* occurs only three times in the *New Testament*: First in *Luke* 23:43, "And Jesus said to him: Amen I say to you: This day you shall be with me in paradise." The second one is in the second *Corinthians*, St. Paul describing one of his ecstasies tells his readers that he was "caught up into paradise" and the third appearance is in the *Apocalypse* 2:7, where St. John, receiving in vision a Divine message for the "angel of the church of Ephesus", hears these words: "To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God." The first two are explicitly associated with the concept of heaven and they apparently replaced the term, however the third occurrence signifies the image of the '*Garden of Eden*' as it appears in the *Book of Genesis*.

9. In the Islamic text, the arabic term الفردوس [al-firdaws] is used as the alternative for the Persian word پردیس [pardis]. Paradise is precisely differentiated from the heaven(s). It has been quoted from Prophet Muhammad in *Dur al-Manthur* (Vol. 09-P692) "Heaven has hundred levels and among these ranks between the earth and the sky, Paradise is the most prosperous place." Term *Paradise* has been distinct from the gardens of heaven while they frequently appear in the whole *Quran* text as Jannah, literally means garden. In the *Quran*, Paradise occurs two times in the whole text. The first is in *Al-Kahf* 18:107, "Lo! Those who believe and do good works, theirs are the Gardens of Paradise for welcome." And in the *Al-Mumenoon* 23-8-23:11 "And who are keepers of their pledge and their covenant, apairi.daezand who pay heed to their prayers. (9) These are the heirs, who will inherit paradise. There they will abide."

10. There is no proof for the actual geographical location of the Garden. However, according to some of the description, especially in the Old Testament, there have been some hypotheses searching for the exact geographical location of the *Terrestrial Paradise* or *Garden of Eden*. Four rivers have been directly addressed as the elements of the *Garden of Eden*: Tigris (*Dijjah*), Euphrates (*Al-Furat*), Gihon (Karun) and Pishon (*Book of Genesis* 2:10-14). Therefore some places have been associated with this description: Northern shore of Persian Gulf, Island of Bahrain, City of Tabriz and Jerusalem. The Parthian/Sassanid city of Ctesiphon and later the city of Baghdad are accordingly located there. For more information see the scholarly book of Delitzsch, F., '*Wo lag das Paradies?*' (1881) and Huet, P.D., '*Traittede la situation du paradis terrestre*' (1691).

11. Kircher, A., *Arca Noe* (Amsterdam: J. Janssonium a Waesberge, 1675). See: <http://bit.ly/jGT0H7>

12. See: Bremmer, J.N., 'Paradise: From Persia, via Greece, into the Septuagint,' in Luttikhuisen, G., ed., *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity*, (Leiden: Brill, 1999)

13. See: <http://bit.ly/iwq2Nd>

14. Xenophon, *Anabasis*, first book 10

15. Ibid., second book 14

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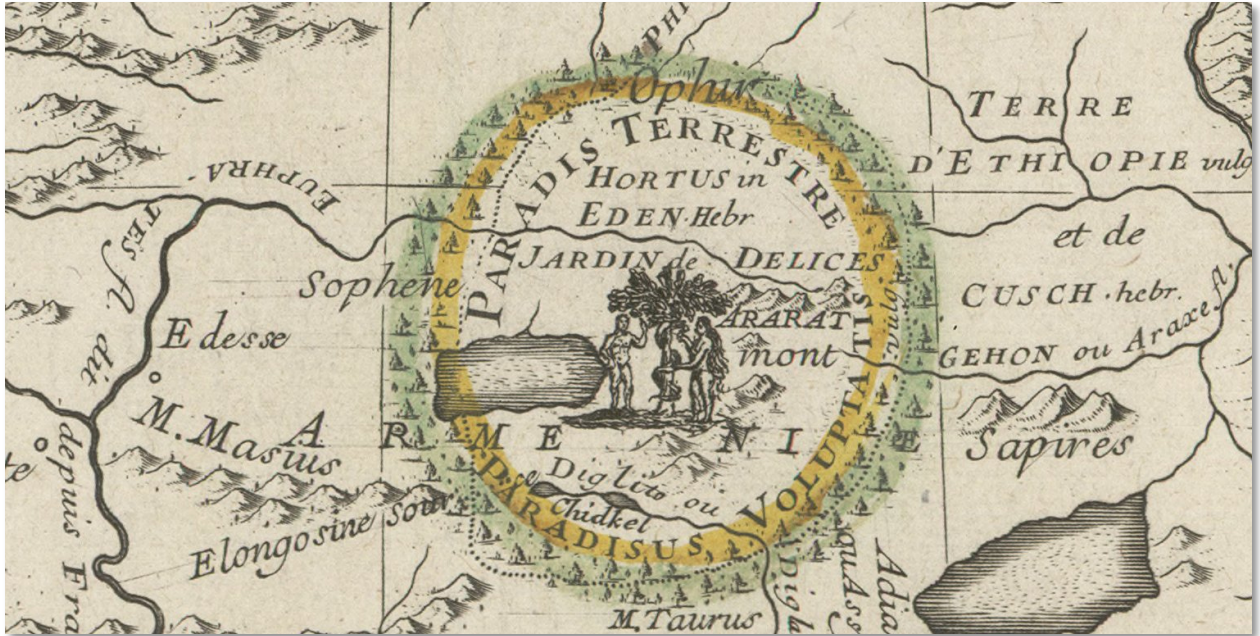
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Carte-du-paradis-terrestre-selon-moyse-hortus-in-eden-hebr-moullart-sanson